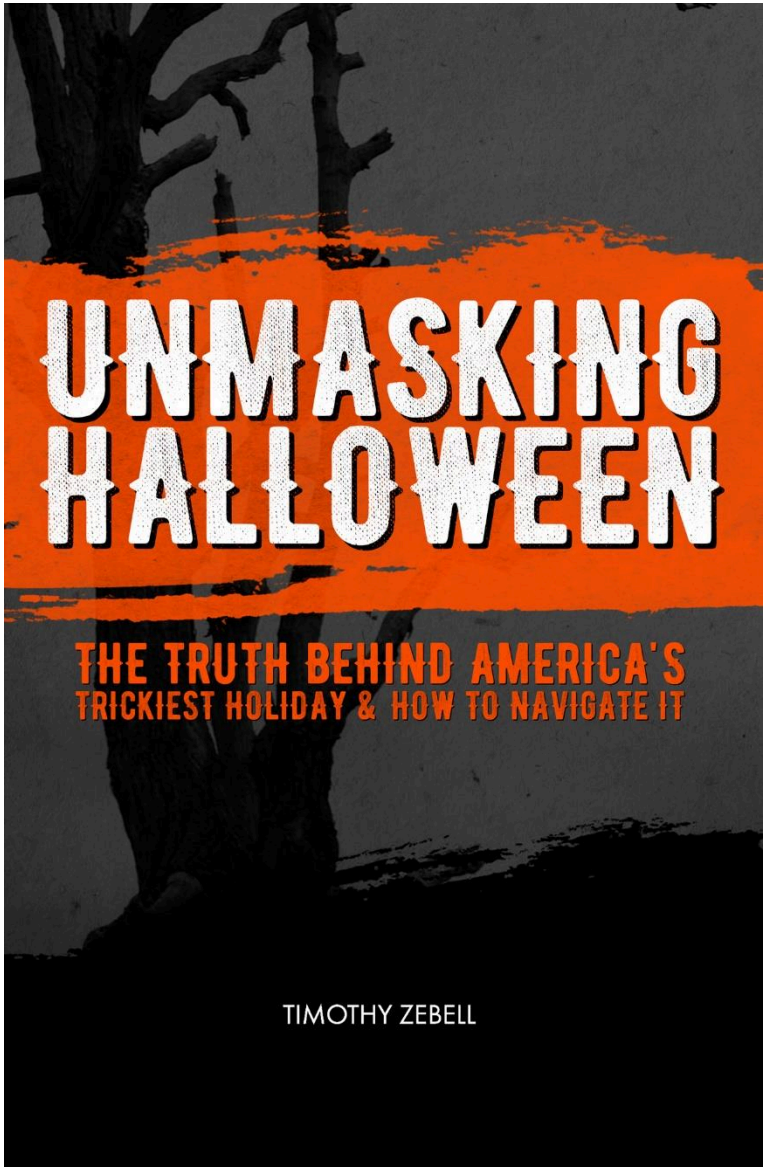
UNMASKING
HALLOWEEN
THE TRUTH BEHIND AMERICA'S
TRICKIEST HOLIDAY & HOW TO NAVIGATE IT
TIMOTHY ZEBELL

Unmasking Halloween

The Truth behind America's Trickiest Holiday and How to Navigate It

Timothy Zebell

Imprint: Independently Published

ISBN-9798455467783
Imprint: Independently Published

Contents

IMPORTANT
Author's Note

"If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday."[1] There is great wisdom in this observation from Nobel Prize laureate, Pearl Buck. However, this endeavor is easier said than done by a society with an attention span smaller than a goldfish.[2] Fortunately, I'm not convinced of the science behind this goldfish claim; instead, I believe people will dedicate whatever time, attention, and thought is necessary to grapple with matters that feel relevant to them.[3, 4] However, what is relevant to one person may be boring to another; moreover, what is boring today may be incredibly relevant tomorrow.

History frequently fits into this category. Often it is either fascinating or boring—not much in between. Recognizing this, the first part of this book may be challenging for some readers. Don't feel guilty. There is nothing wrong with this, and **it may be that some readers opt to skip certain chapters—or possibly the entire first section of this book.** Feel free to do so—particularly chapters two through four, where the histories are the oldest and least familiar. These chapters are perhaps the most important chapters regarding the holiday's character, but

they may not be relevant to some readers. Regardless, this book is intended to be a help, not a chore.

For the most part, the application of this book will still make sense apart from a robust understanding of the holiday's history. However, I am convinced that those who are willing to mine the history and development of Halloween will secure a whole new level of appreciation for the complexity of the questions at hand as well as the role Halloween has played in both shaping and reflecting society. Most of all, I believe this endeavor can result in freedom from guilt and lingering doubts regarding the holiday's true character.

Of course, I'm also certain there are plenty of readers who will find these history chapters fascinating. These chapters may even be convicting. All I can say for certain is that my research for this book greatly surprised me and radically changed my own perspective on Halloween.

Introduction

Halloween in America is huge, but how did a rural harvest festival become one of America's top commercial holidays? With nearly half of all Americans poised to collectively buy approximately 300,000 tons of candy,[1] Halloween has virtually tied Easter as the candy industry's most profitable event.[2] However, companies have discovered that modern consumers are willing to spend their money on far more than sweets. Americans in the 2019 Halloween season spent approximately $3.2 billion on costumes—with nearly half a billion going to pet outfits—$2.6 billion on candy, $2.7 billion on decorations, and $390 million on greeting cards.[3]

No longer is Halloween the frivolous children's holiday that it had become by the mid-20th century. Today it is a commercial juggernaut that cannot be ignored. Beginning in September, Halloween décor floods virtually every retail space, with occasional vestiges of the holiday lingering through Christmas—thanks to the influence of Tim Burton's movie *The Nightmare before Christmas*.

Such commercialism drives our culture to increasingly embrace the ideology and values of Halloween, but what are these values? Do we have any idea from what belief system they are derived? Indeed, where did Halloween begin, and

how did we get to the point where it has become an inescapable element of American culture?

There is a reason why Halloween has captured imaginations for millennia. This mysterious holiday is as complex as it is ancient, but until we can appreciate the ways that Halloween's character and purpose have transformed over time, we will not know how best to navigate this perplexing holiday, both for ourselves and our children.

Part 1
How Did We Get Here?
The History and Development of Halloween

1. A Tricky Holiday

Perhaps it is the allure of an enigmatic history so ancient nobody can recall its origin that makes Halloween irresistible to so many. Perhaps it is humanity's fascination with the macabre, a keen awareness of our mortality, or our curiosity toward the supernatural that entices us. Perhaps it is a cultural memory from a time long forgotten, when food was scarce and winter was filled with horrors, that draws us together to share in a community ritual. Perhaps we are simply nostalgic for days long gone when times seemed simpler and our fears were easier to confront. Perhaps we appreciate an excuse to embrace fantasy, indulge our anxiety, and ignore the rules as we suspend reality for one night every year. Or perhaps we simply have fond childhood memories of costumed endeavors to acquire and consume as much candy as possible, and we desire to pass this tradition and experience along to our children. Whatever the reason, Halloween has become a virtually indispensable component of American culture.

Indeed, the modern incarnation of Halloween is a decidedly American holiday, despite its varied traditions anchored in ancient European practices. These traditions have given rise to much confusion regarding the nature of the holiday, but the overwhelming consensus among

Americans is that it is all good-natured fun. Around 75% of non-religious, and 54% of religious, Americans see nothing but playful fun in the celebration. Only 11% of non-religious, and 23% of religious, Americans avoid the holiday completely.[1]

A common concern among the minority who avoid Halloween is its reputation for being a sacred pagan holiday. Indeed, author of the Satanic Bible and founder of the Church of Satan, Anton LaVey, is alleged to have said, "I'm glad Christians let their kids worship the devil at least one night out of the year."[2] It is unlikely LaVey truly said this[3] as he considered the devil to be "a symbol of passion, pride, liberty, and heroic rebellion,"[4] not a literal being.[5] Regardless, Christian participation in such evil seems anathema.

Halloween certainly functions as an important religious festival for many neo-pagan groups. The modern pagan movement, organized in the 1960s, includes a variety of polytheistic belief systems.[6] Some of these are reconstructions of old ethnic religions, while others are a hodgepodge of ancient European practices mixed with New Age spirituality.[7] Perhaps the most prominent of these new religions is Wicca, among whom Halloween serves as one of the eight major Sabbats—a religious festival commemorating phases of the changing seasons[8]—and "is celebrated with a ritual that acknowledges both the presence of the ancestors and the transfer of power from the Mother Goddess (who rules during summer) to the God who will hold sway until the following Beltane (1 May)."[9]

Uninterested in the commercialization of Halloween, modern pagans often distinguish their festivities by retaining the ancient Celtic title "Samhain."[10] Pronounced "saah-win," neo-pagans differentiate this pre-Christian festival, centered around transformation, from the frivolities of Halloween.[11] Nevertheless, the two are inextricably linked

as Samhain is believed by folklorists to be the oldest precursor and most significant influence upon today's Halloween festivities.

To some degree this is speculation as very little is known about the Celtic festival of Samhain—or even the cultural history of Halloween (see appendix A). Despite its ancient moorings, remarkably few scholarly reviews of Halloween exist. Lisa Morton, one of the world's leading authorities on Halloween, notes, "There are, for example, more critical analyses published and university courses taught on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* than on Halloween."[12] Instead, the history of Halloween has been largely defined by a handful of books—not all of which are entirely factual.

One of the earliest accounts was penned by Charles Vallencey in his six-volume opus *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, begun in the 1770s. Vallencey was a British military engineer, sent to Ireland on a surveying mission in 1762, who developed an obsession with the lore and language of Ireland's ancient Celts. When translating the word *samhain*, Vallencey ignored the established meaning of "summer's end," choosing instead to believe that *samhain* was a Celtic deity also known as Balsab, or "Lord of the Dead."[13] According to Vallencey, during the festival of Samhain, "human beings were burned as an offering in order to appease and cajole Samhain, the lord of Death."[14]

Despite being denounced by the *Quarterly Review* in 1818 as having written "more nonsense than any man of his time," Charles Vallencey's work has been used by religious and community leaders for centuries to condemn the celebration of Halloween.[15] Such sentiments have been memorialized in Christian gospel tracts—small pamphlets designed to be widely disseminated. One tract explains:

> October 31st was set aside to worship the god of the dead at the festival of Samhain. October 31st was the

> Celtic New Years [sic] Eve, the time for their Festival of Death.
>
> The Druids believed that the god of the underworld gathered all the souls of the past year's dead on this night. These souls had been confined to the bodies of various animals to atone for their sins. Animal sacrifices and even human sacrifices were carried out.[16]

It wasn't until 1919 that a 26-year-old American librarian compiled the first serious, historical work on Halloween. Ruth Edna Kelley's *The Book of Hallowe'en* assembled old superstitions and folklore related to the holiday. Thirty years later, the holiday acquired another historical work by Ralph and Adelin Linton, titled *Halloween through Twenty Centuries*. This manuscript is described by Lisa Morton as "a curious and repulsive mix of fact and misinformation so sensationalized that it could best be described as horror fiction."[17] Nevertheless, it stood alongside Kelley's book for 40 years as one of only two books solely devoted to the historical aspect of Halloween. Moreover, "the Linton book would go on to become the standard reference source for generations of evangelical Christians seeking to prove that Halloween was … 'a degenerate holiday.'"[18]

Where does the truth rest? Is Halloween truly a degenerate holiday, or is it merely a time of community and fun? What role do the ancient Druids play in its history and, more importantly, in its modern incarnation? Is Halloween a religious holiday or a secular celebration? And if it is religious in nature, is it Christian or pagan?

Paradoxically, both Christians and pagans claim responsibility for Halloween—something that undoubtedly contributes to the confusion. Some have argued that the defining elements of the holiday are derived not from ancient Celtic practices but from Christian tradition. Indeed, it is possible that the emphasis on the dearly departed, found

in the Catholic Church holidays of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, introduced a focus on the dead to Samhain rather than the reverse.[19] Furthermore, fear and superstition may have come to be associated with Halloween because of a Catholic Christian misunderstanding of the afterlife.[20]

Given such profound confusion and wildly varying origin stories, how should Christians view Halloween? Is Halloween a celebration of darkness and evil? Is it a time set aside for pious remembrance of the dead? Or is it an excuse for frivolous fun stemming from folk tradition?

What are the true origins of Halloween? Does it even matter? Should the holiday's ancient and largely forgotten history influence how we think of today's Halloween celebrations? And what of the holiday's surrounding lore, monsters, and icons? Should Christians associate with these?

These questions are remarkably controversial among today's Christians. Realizing this, let us keep in mind two exhortations recorded in God's Word. History's wisest ruler cautions, *"Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish"* (Prov. 18:13). Additionally, the Apostle Paul urges Christians who disagree over which cultural practices are acceptable, *"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions"* (Rom. 14:1).

Some may believe those who abstain from celebrating Halloween do so because of a form of rigid legalism and a lack of understanding regarding the freedom that Christians experience. Others may believe that participation in Halloween is a celebration of the very things from which Jesus Christ has freed us. Regardless, we are instructed against quarreling over such matters as quarreling only produces division—something Paul describes as a fruit of our sinful nature (Gal. 5:19–20).

This, however, does not mean Christians cannot disagree and debate the matter. There is always a place for

honest conversation and informed disagreement among God's people, but it must be conducted with a spirit of love and understanding—not a need to justify our opinions:

> *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony* (Col. 3:12–14).

Having embraced a spirit of humility that genuinely desires to understand why godly men and women have chosen such different paths when navigating Halloween, let us embark upon an exploration of the holiday's mysterious history and complex development. Resisting the temptation to pass judgment, let us first educate ourselves on the facts of the matter before proceeding to question whether it is appropriate for Christians to celebrate Halloween. Only after we understand how we got to this point in our culture will we be equipped to address what Christians should do with this holiday. In other words, must we reject Halloween, or can it be redeemed? Should it be redeemed? And what does it mean to redeem a holiday?

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. How much do you know about the origins of Halloween?

II. What is it about Halloween that attracts you? Why?

III. Do you think Halloween is a religious holiday or a secular celebration? Why?

    A. Has it always been this way? Do you suspect the origins of Halloween are primarily rooted in paganism, Christianity, secular community events, or a combination?

IV. Does the origin of Halloween matter, or should we simply focus on how the holiday is celebrated today? Why?

V. Do you agree with Anton LaVey's alleged statement, "I'm glad Christians let their kids worship the devil at least one night out of the year"? Is this what Christians are permitting at Halloween? Why?

    A. Anton LaVey considered the devil to be a symbol of passion, pride, liberty, and heroic rebellion, not a literal being. Given this view

of the devil, why do you think LaVey considered Halloween to be devil worship?

VI. In your experience, what do Christian leaders have to say about whether it is appropriate for Christians to celebrate Halloween?

VII. The statement was made, "There is always a place for honest conversation and informed disagreement among God's people, but it must be conducted with a spirit of love and understanding—not a need to justify our opinions." What do you think it looks like to discuss and disagree about the matter of Halloween in a spirit of love and understanding?

VIII. At this point do you lean toward the idea that Christians should reject Halloween or redeem it? If redeem, then what do you think it means to redeem a holiday?

2. The Celtic Festival of Samhain

"Patti Wigington is a soccer mom. She is the vice president of her local PTA. And she's a witch," begins an *ABC News* article. "This Saturday while her neighborhood outside Columbus, Ohio, is crawling with costumed witches in search of candy, Wigington and a group of other local witches will not be celebrating Halloween, but the new year festival Samhain, which also occurs Oct. 31."[1] What is the festival of Samhain, and what is its relation to Halloween?

Accurately answering these questions is difficult. Samhain belongs to the traditions of the ancient and enigmatic Bretons—Irish, British, and Gaels who lived before the Roman invasion, whom we today refer to as the Celts.[2] Halloween historian Lisa Morton notes, "Surprisingly little is known of them since they kept no written records. Our knowledge of Ireland's Celts is based largely on orally transmitted lore (much of which was recorded by Christian monks of the first millennium) and scattered archaeological evidence."[3]

Whatever Samhain may have meant to the ancient Celts, it was clearly a significant event, serving as a focal point throughout the Irish sagas when battles were fought,

journeys began, and wars were decided.[4] Jean Markale, an historian specializing in Celtic studies, classifies Samhain as a "holiday of obligation."[5] None could abstain—whether it be the king, a Druid, or the least shepherd—as failure to participate resulted in a curse of madness, followed by death[6]—a judgment not pronounced by men but by a divine power.[7] Likely, this was due to the civic nature of the festival.

Winter arrives early in northern Europe and endures for nearly six months. It is believed that the first day of winter began a new year for the Celts and was celebrated with the festival of Samhain.[8] Technically, the exact date for this varied because the Celts followed a lunar calendar with 354 days in the year. Because it truly requires 365.25 days for the earth to revolve around the sun, it is believed that approximately every two-and-a-half years a thirteenth month, possibly called Mid Samonios or Sonnocingos, was added to the calendar to realign the seasons.[9] As such, the actual date for Samhain would have varied considerably.[10] Nevertheless, November 1 begins the Celtic new year. More accurately, the Celtic new year begins at sunset on October 31 because the Celts also considered nightfall to be the beginning of the official day.[11]

The true duration of the festival is unknown. The Gallic calendar of Coligny is our oldest, mostly complete, Celtic calendar that seems to reference Samhain.[12] An inscription on this calendar refers to the three nights of Samonios, which many assume to be the Gallic word for Samhain.[13] Also, in the Irish tales of *The Battle of Crinna*[14] and *The Sickbed of Cuchulainn*,[15] mention is made of the three nights before and the three nights after Samhain. Like our present Christmas celebrations, it seems that Samhain may have defined a holiday season—perhaps as many as seven days—with October 31 serving as the pinnacle of the celebration.

The arrival of winter marked the end of the fertile season, when crops were to be harvested, herds culled, and

winter supplies gathered. The earliest Celts were nomadic shepherds. During the summer, herds could be put to pasture, but the lack of grass and the increased dangers of winter required flocks and herds to be kept in stables.[16] With limited grain to feed them, the majority were slaughtered. Only the finest of the herd and flock were kept for breeding.[17]

Irish ethnographer Kevin Danaher describes the work associated with Samhain:

> Samhain, 1 November, was the first day of winter and the end of the farmer's year. All his crops, all his livestock had to be secure for the hard season to come. Corn of all sorts, hay, potatoes, turnips, apples must by now be harvested and stored with ricks well made and well thatched and tied. Dry cattle and sheep were moved from distant moorland and mountain pastures and brought to the field near the farmstead. Milking cows were brought into the byre for the winter and hand-feeding with stored fodder began. In the South-east of Ireland, where this crop was grown, winter wheat had to be in the ground by this date.
>
> Turf and wood for the winter fires must have been gathered, and lucky was the household which had in store a pile of bog-deal, the sweet-smelling, clean burning roots or stems of ancient pine trees, found in cutting turf.[18]

With these seasonal tasks complete, an excess of food, and what may have been the only time the Celts had ready access to an abundance of alcohol, it is not surprising that Samhain became a time of feasting and celebration.[19] Indeed, it was an orgy in the truest sense of the word. It was a time of excess.[20]

Modern pagans believe this to be the origin of Halloween, and they are supported in this belief by folklorists. There is reason to doubt this claim (see appendix A); nevertheless, it has come to be accepted as common knowledge and is rarely questioned. Even the most cursory investigation into the history of Halloween inevitably leads to Samhain, greatly influencing modern sentiments regarding the holiday's nature and character.

Amid the excessive celebration, Samhain also functioned as an administrative day. Being a community event and the beginning of a new year, it served as a prime opportunity to conduct annual business. Rents and land tenures were renewed, livestock was bought and sold, and political matters were decided.[21] Geoffrey Keating, a 12th-century historian, wrote in his book *The General History of Ireland*, "The feast of Tara [the ancient seat of kings] was a royal and general assembly like a parliament. All the scholars of Ireland met every three years at Tara during the time of Samhain, in order to regulate and renew the rules and laws, and to approve the annals and archives of Ireland."[22]

Contracts of all kinds concluded at Samhain.[23] Feasting and sporting alternated with debt-repayment and trials.[24] Criminals were tried, and the worst were executed.[25] Military chiefs were honored.[26] Quarters were prepared for itinerant warriors and shamans while communities were reorganized for the winter months.[27] The multitude of bones from the slaughtered animals were burned in bone fires—today called bonfires.[28] And everyone was expected to set aside their differences—even if only temporarily. Keating records, "It was the custom to put to death anyone who committed violence or rape, who assaulted someone, or who made use of their weapons."[29]

At Samhain the old year concluded, and the community prepared for the new year. Interestingly, stories about the

death of King Conare and King Muirchertach indicate that the king may have been ritually sacrificed in a kind of symbolic theatrical ceremony intended to signify the death of his shortcomings from the previous year and his rebirth into the role of protector and guarantor of justice, balance, and harmony for the community.[30]

Another ritual of regeneration involved fire. Lisa Morton explains, "Before the eve of Samhain, all home hearth fires were extinguished, and the Druids used 'needfire', or fire created by friction, to construct a bonfire on the nearby hill of Tlachtga; embers from this fire were distributed to each household, and a tax was exacted for this service"[31] because the blessed fire was thought to provide protection throughout the year to the home it warmed.[32] Lesley Bannatyne, a foremost authority on Halloween, adds, "Each member of the village could take part in this renewing ritual by rekindling his home fires from a 'new fire' built on the last night of October."[33]

Another kind of ritual fire also appeared throughout the land, due to the waning of the sun as it entered the winter season or the dark half of the year. "Since the Celts believed that like begets like, bonfires were lit high on the hills ... in an attempt to fuel the waning sun."[34] Thus, the traditions surrounding Samhain were not entirely civic or celebratory; they were also religious because "in all ancient societies, spiritual life was in no way separate from material life."[35] However, this religious ritual to rejuvenate the sun was not viewed through the prism of good versus evil because the Celtic religious worldview had no concept of absolute good and evil.

Notions of heaven and hell were unknown to the pre-Christian Celts.[36] The Celtic Otherworld lacked any such differentiation, and all who died were free to inhabit it until such time as their souls should inhabit other bodies to begin new lives.[37, 38] Others argue that the idea of Celtic

reincarnation has no basis in fact.[39] Little is truly known about the Celtic religious beliefs. What is known is that the Celts believed in the immortality of the soul,[40] as expressed in the Gallic words reported by Lucan in the *Pharsalia,* "Death is only the middle of a long life."[41]

"The realms of the Otherworld are those of the ever living, where everything is possible, where great deeds are accomplished," writes Sophie Cornish in *The Celtic Tradition*. "The texts speak of a life which is enhanced to perfection, not an impossible heaven; in the Otherworld, life goes on as in the manifest world, with eating and drinking, making love and merriment."[42] This realm was believed to be overlaid atop our world, being neither up nor "out there," but contiguous with every part of life and accessed through specified gateways, or crossing-places.[43] Moreover, the Otherworld was not bound by the same constraints of time and space that govern our world.[44]

"It was considered easy to pass between the worlds of the created realms and the Otherworld. This proximity occasioned specific rituals of propitiation in which the very young were guarded from accidentally straying into the Otherworld," writes Cornish. "Heroes might venture between the worlds, fortified by courage alone; poets and druids might travel thence, secure in wisdom and knowledge; but the sick and the young were vulnerable and might not return."[45] Indeed, Irish sagas are replete with accounts of humans stumbling upon the Otherworld. Often this occurred on Samhain when the veil between the two worlds was at its thinnest.[46] Since Samhain bridged one year with the next, it was assumed the barrier separating the world of men and the world of spirits was also bridged.[47] In other words, on Samhain, the entrances to the Otherworld were opened.[48]

At Samhain, spirits were said to be on the move. Those who had died within the last year without progressing to the

Otherworld could cross the barrier, but perhaps not before a final interaction with the living. Likewise, on Samhain, the souls of the dead could cross from the Otherworld into this realm to visit loved ones and familiar places for a single evening each year.[49] Joshua Mark writes in the *Ancient History Encyclopedia*:

> Departed loved ones were expected—and welcomed—and the practice of setting out favorite foods for the dead may have originated as early as 2,000 years ago (though this is unclear), but many other kinds of spirits—some which never had human form—could also appear. Elves, fairies, the "wee folk", sprites, and dark energies were just as likely to pay a visit as those one longed to see again one last time.[50]

According to Lesley Bannatyne, "The Celts made offerings to the spirit world in hopes that the spirits of their loved ones would make a brief visit home to enjoy a warm fire at the hearth. Food and wine were set out for the dead souls of the ancestors, sure to be weary from their travels in the netherworld."[51] The many bonfires also served to light the way for these traveling spirits.[52] However, "there was a very good chance that the spirit of a person one may have wronged would also make an appearance," according to Joshua Mark. "In order to deceive the spirits, people darkened their faces with ashes from the bonfires ... A living person would recognize the spirit of a loved one and could then reveal themselves but otherwise remain safe from the unwanted attention of darker forces."[53]

The dead were active at Samhain, and there was a very real sense of danger because other supernatural beings might take advantage of the opportunity to bedevil humans.[54] After all, the Otherworld was known to be inhabited by any number of mischievous faerie folk. Indeed,

Samhain was a night "when the temporal world was thought to be overrun by the forces of magic"[55] as faeries ascended through caves and issued forth from mounds that served as portals between worlds.[56] However, amidst this danger lay a rare opportunity to acquire secret knowledge from the Otherworld. Lesley Bannatyne writes:

> Since spirits were believed to know the secrets of the afterlife and the future, the priests of the Celts, the Druids, held that on the eve of Samhain predictions had more power and omens could be read with more clarity. They divined the health of the tribe, the wisdom of a proposed move, the right time to make magic or the key to curing a sickness.[57]

As a transitional time that bridged the known and the unknown, the ancient festival of Samhain was celebrated with rich traditions imbued with both the sacred and the profane. Associating the waning sun with the extinguishing of life, it was a time when, according to cultural historian David Skal, "ancient rituals of sacrifice and supplication were employed to guarantee a good harvest and, by extension, continued earthly existence."[58] Writing for the journal *Western Folklore,* President of the American Folklore Society Jack Santino expounds:

> The first day of winter was a time of increasing darkness, of the death of vegetation and of the harvest. As such, all of those elements contributed to the symbolism of the day and became part of its power. ... The New Year's day of the Celts, incorporate[d] symbols from different sources, combining agricultural and pastoral ideas of work and seasonal ideas of time with supernatural ideas of life and death. Coming at

> the time of year it did, it associated the fruits of the harvest with ideas of the afterlife and the otherworld.[59]

"Samhain marked the start of a season that rightly belonged to spirits—a time when nights were long and dark fell early," writes Bannatyne. "It was a frightening time for a people who were entirely subject to the forces of nature, and who were superstitious about the unknown, with only a primitive sympathetic magic system to rely on for comfort."[60] Therefore, Lisa Morton concludes, "Although historians have argued over how much Samhain really contributed to the modern celebration of Halloween, it seems likely that the Celtic festival's peculiar mix of harvest, rowdy celebration and fearful supernatural beliefs gave Halloween much of its character."[61]

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. Does it seem to you that the Celtic festival of Samhain was primarily religious or secular? Why?

II. Some Christians teach that the Celts used bonefires to burn human sacrifices. Is this what was occurring at Samhain? Explain.

III. According to the historian, Geoffrey Keating, was Samhain a time when violence and crime were tolerated and even permitted? Explain.

IV. Did the Celts celebrate the increased darkness due to the waning sun? Why?

V. Why did the Celts believe the dead were active at Samhain?

VI. According to Lesley Bannatyne, were the offerings made by families to the spirit world an act of worship? What was their purpose?

VII. Why did the Celts disguise themselves at Samhain?

VIII. Lisa Morton made the statement, “Although historians have argued over how much Samhain really contributed to the modern celebration of

Halloween, it seems likely that the Celtic festival's peculiar mix of harvest, rowdy celebration and fearful supernatural beliefs gave Halloween much of its character." In what ways do we see this influence in contemporary Halloween celebrations?

3. Hallowtide & Guy Fawkes Day

A competing account of Halloween's origins traces the holiday through Christian traditions regarding the dead—particularly the Roman Catholic holiday of All Saints' Day. While memories and lingering aspects of the Celtic festival of Samhain have certainly influenced Halloween's development, it may be that our holiday festivities derive their character first-and-foremost from Roman Catholic doctrine and practices rather than pagan rituals. However, some claim these Christian customs were, themselves, influenced by paganism. What are these claims, and how do they relate to the development of Halloween in America?

"The origin of All Saints' Day cannot be traced with certainty, and it has been observed on various days in different places," writes the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.[1] Persecuted early Christians lived for centuries in the shadow of death. Somber memories of the departed faithful, and the realization that some of those yet living may themselves be martyred, prompted many in the early church to celebrate the lives of exceptionally holy Christian martyrs while reflecting upon their deaths. The earliest surviving record of such an annual commemoration is a celebration of Polycarp,

the Bishop of Smyrna and instructor of Irenaeus[2] who was martyred in 155 A.D.[3, 4] An excerpt from the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* recounts:

> We afterwards took up his bones, as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels, and more purified than gold, and deposited them in a fitting place, whither, being gathered together, as opportunity is allowed us, with joy and rejoicing, the Lord shall grant us to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who have already finished their course, and for the exercising and preparation of those yet to walk in their steps.[5]

Such observances were neither universal nor uniform among early Christians, but as the growing number of martyrs made it difficult to assign a separate day of celebration for each one, some churches endeavored to appoint a common day for the commemoration of all martyred saints.[6] In Edessa, Syria, May 13 was selected. Elsewhere in Syria, the Friday after Easter was designated. In Antioch, Syria and in some cities of the West, the first Sunday after Pentecost was chosen. Most importantly, in Rome, Italy, May 13 was appointed.[7]

By this time, the Roman Catholic Church had been established, and numerous martyrs had been consecrated as "official" saints, while many others remained celebrated but unrecognized by the Church. On May 13, 609 A.D., Pope Boniface IV transformed the ancient Roman Pantheon into the Church of St. Mary and All Martyrs. He assigned May 13 as a date for memorializing, in this new church, Christian martyrs, including those who had died without official recognition of their sanctity.[8]

The former Pope Gregory I had instructed Abbot Mellitus that pagan temples should not be destroyed but rather purified and rededicated to Christ, writing:

> Tell Augustine that he should by no means destroy the temples of the gods but rather the idols within those temples. Let him, after he has purified them with holy water, place altars and relics of the saints in them. For, if those temples are well built, they should be converted from the worship of demons to the service of the true God. Thus, seeing that their places of worship are not destroyed, the people will banish error from their hearts and come to places familiar and dear to them in acknowledgement and worship of the true God.
>
> Further, since it has been their custom to slaughter oxen in sacrifice, they should receive some solemnity in exchange. Let them therefore, on the day of the dedication of their churches, or on the feast of the martyrs whose relics are preserved in them, build themselves huts around their one-time temples and celebrate the occasion with religious feasting. They will sacrifice and eat the animals not any more as an offering to the devil, but for the glory of God to whom, as the giver of all things, they will give thanks for having been satiated.[9]

A handful of years later, Pope Boniface IV asked Emperor Phocas "to order that in the old temple called the Pantheon, after the pagan filth was removed, a church should be made, to the holy virgin Mary and all the martyrs, so that the commemoration of the saints would take place henceforth where not gods but demons were formerly worshipped."[10] Some have argued that Pope Boniface chose the date May 13 for the dedication of this new church and the recognition of

martyred saints because it aligned with the feast of martyrs already celebrated among Christians in Syria. Our record of this feast comes from Ephraem Syrus, a 4th-century theologian pronounced "doctor of the church" by Pope Benedict XV,[11] who referred to an annual feast for all martyred saints in Edessa, Syria.[12]

Others argue that May 13 was chosen because of its correlation with the last day of the Roman feast of Lemuria, a Roman festival of the dead. "Like Samhain," Lisa Morton explains, "Lemuria was celebrated over three nights, and was a time when the dead returned to the world of the living; however, the ghostly visitors of Lemuria (the *lemurs*) were terrifying creatures who were ritually expelled from the household at midnight on 13 May."[13] Regardless of whether the Pope chose this date for its heathen associations, both pagans and Christians in Rome found themselves contemplating the dead during the same evening.

Eventually, the date for this feast in Rome would shift to November 1 after Pope Gregory III dedicated a new chapel within St. Peter's Church in honor of all the saints,[14] where the relics of several martyrs and confessors were housed.[15] As such, the annual memorial expanded to include all martyrs as well as all saints. This was a natural progression as, by this point, consecrated saints in the Roman Catholic Church included not only those who had been killed but also the confessors—those who had confessed their faith through exceptional holiness but were not martyred.[16]

One hundred years later, Pope Gregory IV ordered the universal observation of this all saints' memorial.[17] His decree transformed this local feast into a Church holiday celebrated by all Roman Catholics. Thus, in 835 A.D. All Saints' Day—also known as All Hallows' Day—was formally added to the Christian calendar on November 1. Today it serves as "a day commemorating all the saints of the church, both known and unknown."[18]

Here again, there are some who argue that November 1 was chosen in an effort to neutralize pagan festivities—specifically the Irish festival of Samhain. In their book *Redeeming Halloween,* Kim Wier and Pam McCune write, "This pagan festival was beginning to have an influence even within the Christian community. To counteract this, the church turned to a previously successful strategy of claiming the date as their own."[19] However, history professor Nicholas Rogers notes that by 800 A.D., the celebration of the dead in England and Germany "took place on 1 November. In Ireland, it was commemorated on 20 April, a chronology that contradicts the widely held view that the November date was chosen to Christianize the festival of Samhain."[20] If anything, it seems that the November date for All Saints' Day follows after the Germanic traditions regarding the dead rather than those of the Irish.[21]

All Souls' Day, on the other hand, may have Irish influence. Celebrated the day after All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day is a time set aside to pray for the remaining dead. Prayers are offered for the souls of those in purgatory—an intermediate place of refining for the dead where sins are purged before entrance to heaven may be granted.

It is likely that the speculations and practices of Irish priests and monks contributed to the doctrine of purgatory. Comparative religion professor Tom Sjöblom details how the converging of penitential exercises of Irish monks, a legend involving Saint Patrick, and a tradition of securing atonement for sins through different kinds of torments and trials influenced the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory.[22] Likewise, in his book *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween,* Jean Markale suggests some degree of synchronization when he highlights similarities between ancient Celtic religious beliefs and the concept of purgatory. According to Markale, Celtic ghosts who interact with the living on Samhain include suffering souls who have not

"achieved the role they were intended during their lifetime. In this Other World, these souls demand the right to attempt a new experience, to redeem in some way their past weaknesses either through personal trials or with the help of the living."[23]

Regardless of its origin, the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory rests at the heart of All Souls' Day. Unlike All Saints' Day, which is a holiday of obligation for Roman Catholics, All Souls' Day has never been officially declared a compulsory holiday. Nonetheless, it has generally been observed by Catholic churches since 1050 A.D.[24] It is a tradition first established by Abbot Odilon of Cluny in 993 A.D., based upon a passage in the apocrypha—non-canonical books included in the Catholic Bible:[25]

> Besides, that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forsomuch as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain. And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.[26]

Odilon was likely influenced by Amalarius of Metz—a liturgical writer who, in the 800s A.D. wrote, "After the office of the saints I have inserted the office for the dead; for many pass out of this world without at once being admitted into

the company of the blessed."[27] Abbot Odilon became greatly concerned for those souls who were not yet worthy to enter heaven.[28] According to his biographer—Jotsald, another monk at Cluny who wrote *Vita sancti Odilonis*—it was in response to the testimony of a French monk that Odilon ordered all the Clunisian monasteries to consecrate the day in memory of the departed faithful through the repetition of prayers, the celebration of mass, and the donation of as much money as possible to the most miserable of the poor.[29]

The French monk informed Abbot Odilon regarding a hermit he had met upon a rocky island of Sicily while returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He recounted the words of the hermit:

> There are places where the souls of sinners, for a predetermined time, are purged of the remains of their sins in a burning fire and with great suffering. The demons who inflict these tortures are quite enraged against those who, with their prayers and alms for the poor, shorten their sojourn in this place and, in some way, make off with the souls they torture. Among these ravishers of souls, the most effective are the monks of Cluny with the Abbot Odilon at their head. So, I implore you in the name of God, if you have the good fortune to find yourself among your brothers, make known to this community all you have heard from my mouth, and invite his monks to multiply their prayers, their vigils, and alms for the rest of the souls plunged in torment, so that there may be more joy in heaven and that the devil may be defeated and spited.[30]

Limited instances exist of earlier days of prayer for the dead—such as a formal agreement between the monasteries of Saint-Gall and Reichenau to pray for the deceased of both monasteries on November 14 of each year—but it was the

decree of Abbot Odilon that is considered to be the inauguration of All Souls' Day.[31] "Since All Saints' Day [h]ad been widely celebrated on November 1, Abbot Odilo chose November 2 to be observed as a feast for all the departed," according to Lesley Bannatyne.[32] Thus was established the third of the three days that came to be known as Hallowtide. Included are the eve of All Saints' Day (All Hallowe'en), All Saints' Day (All Hallows), and All Souls' Day.

The close proximity of these similar holidays naturally produced a degree of confusion between them, which is reflected in the numerous and varying traditions attached to these festivals. As the Roman Catholic Church's influence spread across Europe, the traditions of Hallowtide were influenced by local customs and pagan practices. Lesley Bannatyne observes, "Each celebration retained a bit of its pagan mystery and each picked up the nuances of its host country."[33] What had begun with the greatest of Christian intent had evolved into an amalgamation of Christian and pagan revelries.

Then, on October 31, 1517, everything changed. An ordained priest, professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, and provincial vicar of Saxony and Thuringia named Martin Luther sent his bishop a copy of *The Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*—a work that would come to be known as the "Ninety-five Theses." Church tradition maintains that Luther also nailed a copy of his theses to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. However, "Scholars Krämer, Götz Trenkler,[34] Gerhard Ritter,[35] and Gerhard Prause[36] contend that the story of the posting on the door, even though it has settled as one of the pillars of history, has little foundation in truth.[37]"[38]

Martin Luther was particularly troubled by the Roman Catholic Church's newfound practice of selling indulgences to raise money for building projects. In Roman Catholicism

indulgences provide "a way to reduce the amount of punishment one has to undergo for sins."[39] These can be applied to the living or the dead.[40]

It was said at the time, "As soon as the coin in the casket rings, the rescued soul to heaven springs."[41] This deeply troubled Martin Luther who argued that forgiveness of sins was God's alone to impart. Moreover, this practice subverted repentance. Theses 35 states, "They who teach that contrition is not needed for those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessional privileges are preaching unchristian doctrine."[42] Likewise, theses 39 states, "It is exceedingly difficult, even for the most learned theologians, at one and the same time, to tell people of the abundance of indulgences and the need for true contrition."[43]

Martin Luther's treatise sparked the Reformation Movement. Protestant Reformers were motivated by the doctrine of justification through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and they denied the existence of purgatory, teaching that all departed Christians live in the presence of God in heaven.[44] They also taught that Christians have direct access to God, which negated the need to solicit intercessory prayers from dead saints—a practice that had become common on All Saints' Day. This split the Church and produced an array of protestant denominations, which rejected the celebration of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day as aberrations of sound doctrine.[45]

Tensions increased between the new Protestants and Roman Catholics. By 1605 A.D., the protestant King James I sat upon the throne of England, and a cabal of Roman Catholics plotted his assassination. On November 5, Guy Fawkes was caught attempting to ignite 36 barrels of gunpowder beneath the House of Lords. Had he been successful, it would have not only killed the king but also everyone in Parliament, which was in session. Instead, the

public celebrated King James' survival with bonfires and the burning of Guy Fawkes effigies, frequently followed by effigies of the pope.[46]

Days before the conspirators were executed in January, Parliament passed the Observance of the 5th of November Act, commonly known as the Thanksgiving Act.[47, 48] It was described as "a holiday forever in thankfulness to God for our deliverance and detestation of the Papists," and it soon became one of England's most beloved Protestant festivals, respectively known as Guy Fawkes Day or Bonfire Night.[49]

Because of its proximity to Hallowtide, Guy Fawkes Day replaced the commemorations of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day in Protestant-controlled areas. Most of the customs associated with Hallowtide were preserved in Guy Fawkes Day celebrations; nonetheless, the religious nature of the autumn festival was gradually purged, leaving only a secular celebration of the king. For all practical purposes, there were now two Hallowtides. The Roman Catholic Hallowtide remained religious and was observed between October 31 and November 2; whereas, the Protestant "Hallowtide" became a secular festival observed on November 5.

Both Hallowtide traditions eventually hopped the ocean. Despite the Puritan resistance to holidays, Guy Fawkes Day migrated to the New World, where it took root in protestant colonies while Roman Catholic colonies preserved the traditions of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. Among the fledgling American colonies, there would be no homogenous Halloween culture until after the Revolutionary War, when Americans created their own amalgamated tradition of play parties, centered around community.

We will likely never truly know whether our Halloween celebrations in America trace their origins first to Samhain or to the Roman Catholic Hallowtide. However, it doesn't

really matter. Whether by design or by accident, the Celtic and Roman Catholic festivals intersected to form something neither wholly Christian, nor wholly pagan.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. Do you find it surprising to think of Halloween as possibly being a Christian holiday? Why?

II. What do you think of the early church's practice of commemorating the death of Christian martyrs?

III. Do you agree with Pope Gregory's tactic of purifying pagan temples and rededicating them to Christ, believing that the people "seeing that their places of worship are not destroyed … will banish error from their hearts and come to places familiar and dear to them in acknowledgment and worship of the true God"? Why?

IV. Do you suspect it is more likely that Pope Boniface chose the date of May 13 for the recognition of martyred saints because it aligned with the feast of martyrs already celebrated among Christians in Syria or because of its correlation with the last day of the Roman feast of Lemuria, a Roman festival for the dead? Why?

V. Do you think Pope Gregory IV chose to celebrate All Saints' Day on November 1 in an effort to neutralize pagan festivities related to the festival of Samhain? Why?

A. If so, was this a wise tactic? Why?

VI. All Souls' Day stems from the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. Is this a case of faulty doctrine resulting in faulty application? Explain.

VII. Theses 39 in Martin Luther's treatise states, "It is exceedingly difficult, even for the most learned theologians, at one and the same time, to tell people of the abundance of indulgences and the need for true contrition." Why is this the case?

VIII. In what ways does celebrating Guy Fawkes Day produce an entirely different mindset than Hallowtide (All Hallows Eve, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day)?

IX. Why is it significant that, at America's founding, there were two separate Autumn festival traditions represented in Hallowtide and Guy Fawkes Day?

4. A Holiday of Divination

Throughout history, mankind has sought a means of piercing the veil between the physical and spiritual realms in an effort to obtain divine knowledge. Such pursuit is especially common at Halloween, a tradition likely dating back to the ancient festival of Samhain. Indeed, the Samhain feast, with its excess of alcoholic drinks and food, may have been one such means of divination—at least for some.

The preferred meat at Celtic celebrations was pork—a magical food deemed sacred.[1] Wild boars and domesticated pigs were believed to be animals from the Otherworld. Not surprisingly, swineherds were often Druid priests who guarded these divine creatures whose meat was essential for feeding the tribe.[2]

Swine and boars were "associated with the cycle of birth and death, the moon, the underworld, and intuitive wisdom."[3] As such, these magical creatures had the potential to unlock the secrets of the Otherworld, or even to procure immortality. According to Jean Markale, an historian specializing in Celtic studies:

> The meat of the pig was considered by the ancient Celts to be a food through which one could obtain immortality. Its consumption, tied to the ingestion of

> alcoholic drinks, essentially beer and mead, procured the drunkenness necessary for 'unhooking' oneself toward the Other World. This unhooking could occur within the atemporal space of the Samhain holiday, when the Feast of the Gods is realized on the earth in a way that is not only symbolic but also magical and ecstatic.[4]

More than merry drunkenness and feasting, some revelers likely sought a transcendental experience. After all, Samhain was a fantastic night when the veil between the worlds was thin and crossover was common. Those who did cross into the Otherworld were almost assured to return with some form of divine knowledge, and Celtic mythology is replete with stories of such experiences. Often these tales involve ghosts, reanimated corpses, monsters, and demons. Told around bonfires, these were some of history's earliest ghost and horror stories.

Perhaps the most famous of these accounts is the *Adventure of Nera*. Lisa Morton summarizes this tale:

> The eponymous hero is challenged by King Ailill to place a loop around the foot of a hanging corpse on Samhain. Nera succeeds, and the corpse promptly begs him for a drink, claiming to have been thirsty when he was hanged. Nera removes the dead man from the gallows, and tries to find a house where he can treat the corpse to a drink; when he does, the corpse spits the drink back at the humans who are present, and they immediately die. Nera returns the corpse to the gallows and journeys back to Ailill's fort, only to find it engulfed in flames set by a fairy army. He follows the army back through their mound, and finds himself in the Otherworld. He takes a fairy wife there, who tells him that the fire was a hallucination but will actually

> happen unless he can warn Ailill. Returning to our world, Nera finds that no time has passed (a common theme in later Halloween tales is how time passes differently in the fairy realm), and he warns Ailill, who manages to destroy the malevolent *sidh* before they can attack again. Nera, however, spends the rest of his life in the Otherworld.[5]

Samhain was an ideal time for such supernatural experiences because it served as a liminal holiday—meaning it was a time of transition. Samhain stood at the boundary between the two halves of the Celtic year, brimming with danger and uncertainty as it bridged the realm of the living and the dead.[6] Former Editor of *Journal of American Folklore* and President of the American Folklore Society, Jack Santino, notes, "Since the day was a bridge between one year and the next, the barrier between the world of men and the world of spirits was also bridged."[7] Likewise, history professor Nicholas Rogers writes, "In Ireland, the *fé-fiada,* the magic fog that rendered people invisible, was lifted on Samhain, and elves emerged from the fairy raths, erasing the boundaries between the real and otherworld."[8]

The intersection between worlds at Samhain produced real danger, but this brush with the Otherworld also produced opportunity. Halloween historian Lesley Bannatyne explains:

> Since spirits were believed to know the secrets of the afterlife and the future, the priests of the Celts, the Druids, held that on the eve of Samhain predictions had more power and omens could be read with more clarity. They divined the health of the tribe, the wisdom of a proposed move, the right time to make magic or the key to curing a sickness.[9]

The approaching season of disease, cold, and infertility was certain to claim lives. People wanted to know who would survive the coming winter. In ancient times this was divined by reading signs in the entrails and bones of the animals slaughtered during the annual culling.[10, 11] Eventually other traditions were added. For instance, among the Welsh every family member made a mark on a white stone, which was thrown into a bonfire on Halloween. In the morning, any stone that couldn't be found presaged the death of its owner in the coming year.[12]

Even during the Christian Hallowtide, divination was practiced. Those "brave enough to stand by the church windows at midnight on All Hallow's Eve might hear a sermon delivered by Satan in which he would reveal the names of all those from the parish who would die during the coming year."[13] Others who hid in the church graveyard might witness a ghostly procession at midnight of all parish members destined to die within the new year. If any in the procession turned back, it signified that they would become gravely ill, but they would manage to escape death.[14]

The abundant means of divining the future greatly multiplied with time. Increasingly, these practices focused on learning the nature of one's future spouse—whether by name, character, or profession.[15] Such divinations were the most popular aspect of Halloween until the 20th century.[16] Some took these seriously, while others considered them to be harmless and exciting superstitions.

Despite spawning a myriad of variations, the essential core of these rituals has proven to be quite enduring. These Occult customs migrated to the New World and took root throughout colonial America. "In the England the Virginian settlers left behind, Christian religion and occultism were not clearly separated into two distinct, nonintersecting spheres," according to Lesley Bannatyne. "As a result, early colonists accepted and practiced a good bit of magic, either

in conjunction with their religion or independent of it. Occult practices existed everywhere in young America," despite legal punishments in every colony for those convicted of using magic.[17]

Many of these rituals have been immortalized in a playful poem by Robert Burns titled "Halloween."[18] In their books, Halloween historians Lesley Bannatyne and Lisa Morton have also compiled extensive lists of historic divination rites, mostly practiced by young maidens at Halloween. Below are a few highlights of the more popular customs (see appendix B for additional examples):

- Holding a candle, a maiden would stare into a mirror, hoping to catch a glimpse of her future husband staring back over her shoulder.[19]
- Maidens uprooted cabbage and kale to divine the nature of their future spouses. This was determined "from the taste (a bitter stalk meant a bitter mate), the shape (straight or curved, indicating the condition of the spine), and the amount of dirt clinging to the root (degree of wealth). The divination worked best if the kale was stolen; it was most telling if practiced on Halloween."[20] Others entered the field backwards or blindfolded,[21] and some nailed the stalk over the main doorway, believing the first young person to pass beneath it would be their future husband—or at least bear their spouse's initials.[22]
- Apples were hung on a string or placed into a tub of water while the maidens' hands were tied behind their backs. Whoever was first to retrieve an apple using her mouth would be the earliest to wed.[23] Others first carved initials into the apples and place them into a tub of water where maidens would

"dook" and bob for them using only their mouths. Upon retrieving an apple, the initials revealed whom she would marry. Or perhaps a bit of a retrieved apple might be placed underneath the maiden's pillow that night to stimulate prophetic dreams.[24]

- Apple parings were flung over a maiden's left shoulder while reciting the rhyme, "I pare this pippin round and round again; My sweetheart's name to flourish on the plain; I fling the unbroken paring o'er my head; My sweetheart's letter on the ground is read." The apple paring would then be examined to determine the initials of her future spouse. Others cut open apples to divine their future according to the number of visible seeds. Seeds could also be named and then stuck to the face. "The first to fall might indicate the failed suitor, or the number of seeds remaining after a clap might indicate the number of years until marriage."[25]

During the Victorian Age, many of these divination rituals were transformed into Halloween parlor games. Being thus trivialized as mere entertainment, they were increasingly bereft of their superstitious elements. In 1881 *St. Nicholas Magazine* wrote, "Belief in magic is passing away, and the customs of All-hallow Eve have arrived at the last stage; for they have become mere sports, repeated from year to year like holiday celebrations."[26]

Devoid of their supernatural origins, these holiday festivities were eventually abandoned and left to the children when the world entered the modern age. As adult society shifted its focus to travel, politics, history, and current events in the early years of the 20th century, "grown-ups could no longer justify bobbing for apples, jumping over

candles or fortune-telling. The celebration of Halloween was given over to children."[27]

Unmoored from its history of fearing the unknown and its obsession with supernatural knowledge, Halloween had evolved to become a "friendly, harmless and cheerful holiday, more fun than frightening." Only the safest of ancient customs were preserved as children's games, such as bobbing for apples. These were soon combined with other common activities, such as scavenger hunts, races, and counting games.[28] By the early 20th century, Halloween in America had become little more than a cheerful children's holiday.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. What do you think is the reason for mankind's fascination with knowing the future?

II. What made Samhain an ideal time to divine the future?

III. What is the significance that, at Samhain, the *fé-fiada* was lifted—the magic fog in Ireland that rendered the faerie folk invisible?

IV. Why do you think people have historically been so focused on sickness, death, and marriage when seeking to divine the future?

V. Did you realize bobbing for apples was originally an Occult ritual of divination? Does this change the way you think about the activity? Why?

VI. During the Victorian Age, many divination rituals were transformed into Halloween parlor games. Given their Occult origins, should Christians avoid these games? Why?

VII. Why was Halloween relinquished to the children after centuries of being celebrated by adults?

VIII. When Halloween was relinquished to the children, it was unmoored from its history of fearing the unknown and its obsession with supernatural knowledge. It became known as a friendly, harmless, and cheerful holiday. At this point in history, would there be any reason for Christians to reject Halloween? Explain.

5. Origins of Trick or Treat

The beloved Halloween tradition of masquerading amid neighborhoods in search of apples, candy, and money may have begun as a kind of charity. When instituting All Souls' Day in 993 A.D., Abbot Odilon encouraged the repetition of prayers, the celebration of mass, and the donation of as much money as possible to the most miserable of the poor. He also ordered that a meal be given to a dozen of the poor.[1] Eventually these instructions morphed into a practice called "souling."

Small soul cakes were baked and given to the town's poor in exchange for their prayers for departed family members.[2] Seventeenth-century pioneer archaeologist and antiquarian John Aubrey describes the practice of souling in Shropshire, England: "There is sett on the Board a high-heap of Soule-cakes lyeing one upon another like the picture of the Sew-Bread in the old Bibles. They are about the bignesse of 2d [tuppenny] cakes and nearly all the visitants that day take one" after reciting the rhyme, "A Soule-cake, a Soule-cake; Have mercy on all Christian soules for a soule-cake."[3]

Seeking these cakes, the poor would travel "from house to house with hollowed-out turnip lanterns, whose candle connoted a soul trapped in purgatory."[4, 5] "Over time," Halloween historian Lesley Bannatyne notes, "the custom

would grow more popular, and young men and boys would go from house to house singing 'souling' songs, but asking for ale, food or money instead of soul cakes."[6] The practice became a socially acceptable opportunity for the poor to beg, as an alternative souling song reveals:

> A soul, a soul for a soul cake
> One for Jack Smith,
> And one for Tom White
> And one for myself and I'll bid you goodnight.
> My clothes are very ragged
> My shoes are very thin
> I've got a little pocket
> To put three halfpence in
> And I'll never come a souling
> Till another year.[7]

"As these rhymes suggest," according to history professor Nicholas Rogers, "souling was often only nominally concerned with praying for souls in purgatory. It formed part of a ritual cycle of enforced charity by the laboring classes as winter set in."[8] Eventually masks were donned and small processions of "guisers" arrayed in costumes paraded from door to door in search of apples, nuts, and copper coins.[9] It became a time of inversion, when the poor could make demands of the rich.

Rogers writes:

> In this season of misrule, choristers became boy bishops and urban leaders were temporarily usurped from power by mock-mayors and sheriffs in a ritualized topsy-turvy world replete with "subtle disguisings, masks, and mummeries."[10] In country districts, "the wilde heads of the parish" chose a "Ground Capitaine [grand captain] of mischief whom they innoble with

> the title of my Lorde of Misserule," Philip Stubbs observed. Gaudily attired with ribbons, bells, and handkerchiefs "borrowed for the most parte of their prettie Mopsies," this merry troupe of revelers parade the churchyards with "their Hobby horses and other monsters shirmishyng amongst the throng," singing and dancing "with such a confused noise that no man can heare his own voice." These mummers demand tributes from the neighborhood to maintain their "Heathenerie, Devilrie," and "Drunkennesse," Stubbs continued. Those that refused to contribute were "mocked and flouted as shamefully, yea, and many times carried upon the cowlstaff, and dived head and ears in water, and otherwise most horribly abused.[11] 12

Folklorists commonly link such guising and mummeries with the ancient Celtic and Nordic traditions of traveling to the homes of loved ones on New Year's Day, dressed in mummer costumes, singing and chanting a rhyme designed to chase away malevolent spirits.[13] The similarities with souling are inescapable. Nonetheless, it may be that the form of guising and mumming described by Rogers stems instead from a conflation of souling with another Roman Catholic tradition of honoring the dead. "Villagers were ... encouraged to masquerade on this day," writes Lesley Bannatyne, "not to frighten unwelcome spirits, but to honor Christian saints. On All Saints' Day, churches throughout Europe and the British Isles displayed relics of their patron saints. Poor churches could not afford genuine relics and instead had processions in which parishioners dressed as saints, angels and devils."[14]

However it may have developed, souling and guising assumed many forms and became a hodgepodge of religious traditions, folklore, and local customs. Moreover, these practices were not confined to All Saints' Day. Acceptable

alternative "doleing days" included "Guy Fawkes Day (5 November); St. Clement's Day (23 November); St. Catherine's Day (25 November); St. Andrew's Day (30 November); even St. Nicholas's Day (6 December) and St. Thomas's [Day] (21 December)."[15]

With the rise of Protestantism, the Catholic holidays were abandoned, and any vestiges of religious underpinnings in these English traditions were lost as the country increasingly rejected Roman Catholicism. Only the anti-Catholic celebration of Guy Fawkes survived when, in 1647, the British Parliament banned all festivals except the November 5 observance. However, by this point Guy Fawkes Day had already assimilated many of the traditions associated with Hallowtide because of its close proximity.[16]

Guy Fawkes Day soon became the preeminent autumn celebration throughout Great Britain, and the eve of the celebration became known as "mischief night" across most of northern England.[17] According to one account, "On this night children are half under the impression that lawlessness is permissible. Householder's front doors are repeatedly assaulted with bogus calls, their gates removed, the dustbin lids hoisted up lamp posts, their window panes daubed with paint, their doorknobs coated with treacle."[18]

The night before Guy Fawkes Day was a time of inversion, pranks, and guising. Bannatyne recounts:

> Where once they had begged for "soul cakes" in commemoration of All Saints' Day, boys now dressed in costume and begged for lumps of coal to burn their effigies of Guy Fawkes. By the time King George III took the throne, just 15 years before the onset of the American Revolution, children had combined the Catholic soul-cake song with the Protestant coal-begging song:

> Soul! Soul! For a lump of coal
> A stick and a stake for King George's sake
> Please to give a lump.[19]

Money was begged to purchase fireworks and lumps of coal, while faggots were solicited to build celebratory bonfires.[20] Upon the bonfires effigies of the Pope were burned, along with those of Guy Fawkes and political leaders in disrepute. The spirit of such revelries is captured in the children's song of Lewes, England where 17 Protestant martyrs had been burned at the stake: "A rope, a rope, to hang the Pope; A piece of cheese to toast him; A barrel of beer to drink his health; And a right good fire to roast him."[21] "Indeed," writes, Bannatyne, "the fireworks, fires, masquerades, politics, pumpkins and pranks of Guy Fawkes Day were very much a part of the England fabric at the time of American colonization."[22]

Naturally, European migrants brought their customs and traditions with them to the New World. Harvest festivals, Guy Fawkes Day, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day were practiced throughout the colonies, depending upon their religious and folk fabric, but the origins and meaning of these holidays were gradually forgotten.[23] In the New World, Guy Fawkes Day became known as "Pope Night" until American leaders in the Revolutionary War opposed the holiday for fear of offending the religious sensibilities of their French allies. Nevertheless, scattered instances of the celebration continued throughout America until the end of the 19th century, by which time so much of the festival's origins had been forgotten that it had become known as "Pork Night."[24]

Various superstitions and remnants of European customs did migrate to America, but they were largely suppressed by the Puritan mindset, which rejected reveling holidays, and eventually by America's military alliance with

France.[25] After the Revolutionary War, celebrations "became inclusive rather than exclusive, public rather than private, secular more than religious, and centered around the community rather than the church."[26] It is this environment that gave rise to what is the more likely pre-cursor to the contemporary Halloween holiday in America.

Already accustomed to harvesttime gatherings centered around tasks—such as cornhusking parties, apple-paring parties, sugaring, and sorghum-making days—communities began organizing events merely for fellowship and fun. These were called play parties and often occurred in late autumn. Lesley Bannatyne explains:

> Ghost stories were an integral part of this autumn celebration, and tales of the ancestral dead were told and retold by elders to a spellbound crowd. Whereas in earlier colonial days divinations were done privately and in secret, communities now gathered together to play fortune-telling games. Dancing, singing, stomping and cheering went on well into the night—if not the next morning—and some later play parties featured a school pageant of sorts. … Play parties contributed to a sense of community and nurtured and prodded young romances.[27]

In the 19th century, America received a flood of immigrants—particularly from Ireland, where the potato blight had struck the nation's staple food crop.[28] In the span of seven years, 700,000 Irish Catholics emigrated to North America. By 1890 nearly 2 million Irish men and women lived in the United States, outnumbering all other immigrant groups, combined, well into the 20th century.[29]

The Irish brought with them their traditions, superstitions, and folklore—much of which had long been incorporated into their celebration of All Saints' and All

Souls' Day. For centuries, Irish girls had practiced divination with apples, fire, mirrors, and yarn while mumming parties of boys traipsed from house to house, led only by a carved-out turnip, lit with a candle. "These Halloween divination games, nighttime visits and pumpkins were quickly adopted by fun-loving Americans (who had, after all, been using divination and fruits of the harvest to celebrate their own autumn festivals). The Irish customs reinforced America's embryonic Halloween tradition and added lush details to its symbols."[30]

Many of these customs were distorted and tamed by Victorian-era periodicals, which mined European folklore in an effort to portray Halloween as an exotic night centered around mystery and childlike divinations.[31] Bannatyne notes:

> To the Victorians, Halloween needed to be subdued, to be made safe for the adults and children of America—a holiday not concerned with death or destruction, witchcraft or walking dead, but with entertainments and games that could pass muster at any society party; a holiday not of Irish Catholic origin, but of quaint Scottish or old English descent; a holiday not for the lower classes, but for the upper classes.[32]

Truth and fiction blended together to create a new, more palatable, origin story for Halloween. "Media sources tended to include the Irish with the whole of the British Isles—including England, Scotland, and Wales—when discussing the historic origin of the holiday."[33] Preferring a protestant English origin over an Irish Roman Catholic beginning, America's upper class attributed Irish folklore to Scotland and England. They even reinvented All Saints' Day, imagining it to be an Episcopalian religious day instead of a Catholic one.[34] Furthermore, historical divination games

were reduced to parlor games and were employed by Victorian storytellers as devices to intermingle lovers.[35] Indeed, "the emphasis on matchmaking at these parties frequently overshadowed the more sinister associations of the holiday, such as witches and witchcraft or communing with the dead."[36]

In 1876 the *New York Times* declared, "The glory of this once popular festival has departed," writing:

> Its triumphs and rough jollities, festivals and strange rites are a matter of history, and live only in the immortal verse of Burns and traditional lore. The timid Amaryllis of these more prosaic times does not trust her matrimonial fate to the doubtful chance of picking out, blindfolded, the basin of dirty or clean water, or of depending for a "weel taur'd" man on the likelihood of "pooling" at the stroke of midnight a straight-rooted "kail runt." There are still kept up in the western and rural parts of southern Scotland and Ireland some of the rough old games so peculiar to this festival, but over the world, wherever Scotchmen, Englishmen or Irishmen are domiciled, the trail of civilization is over them all. Evening parties, with a ring hid mysteriously away in some elegant work of the pastry cook's genius, have taken the place of the great "black pot" full of mashed potatoes and milk. The rough reel and jig have been replaced by the seductive waltz or pleasant quadrille, and the hilarious "hoohs" and clatter of hob nailed boots ... mingling in inharmonious numbers with the squeaking of a villainous old fiddle have been succeeded by the rustling of silks ... and the strains of the high-toned centennial prize piano forte. Like the curious marriage and funeral customs of old ... the old Halloween revelries are gone. Even in New York,

> among the Scottish inhabitants, they live in memory only as traditions.[37]

"Children's magazines printed pretty pictures of fairies and witches; ladies' periodicals became concerned with how a Halloween party was given—decorating ideas, what foods to serve, how to break the ice."[38] Masquerading and reveling from house to house was replaced with costume parties, and ghost stories became romantic tales, as ladies' magazines used Halloween as a narrative tool for excusing unbridled passion in the dark of night.[39]

By the end of the century, however, these ladies' periodicals replaced their fiction and romance sections with travel, politics, history, and current events. There also emerged a rising middle-class in America's cities. "In the early years of the new century, grown-ups could no longer justify bobbing for apples, jumping over candles or fortune-telling," writes Lesley Bannatyne. "The celebration of Halloween was given over to children."[40]

Anything dangerous or frightening was purged from Halloween parties, and parents were cautioned to avoid all things grotesque and unpleasant.[41] By the early 20th century, Halloween was touted as nothing more than a harmless and fun holiday for children. According to Bannatyne:

> Mothers did their best to provide only benign black cats, pumpkins and ghosts; Halloween play took on the characteristics of other American games of the time. There were scavenger hunts, races, ball games, counting games, games of skill (such as hitting one of a row of cardboard pumpkins and winning a prize) or variations on musical chairs. A fortune-telling booth or wheel-of-fortune game replaced the old-world divination games the teenagers were so fond of. Halloween parties now catered to the youngest

> children; matchmaking games, kissing games and futuring lost their pertinence.[42]

Also near the turn of the 20th century, the Irish tradition of pranking, modelled after the fabled antics of the faerie folk,[43] took root in North America—particularly in rural areas—such that October 31 was largely celebrated by mischievous boys.[44] A 1905 publication titled *The Boy Craftsman: Practical and Profitable Ideas for a Boy's Leisure Hours* writes:

> While the superstitious fears of Halloween have almost entirely disappeared, the evening is generally celebrated in the same manner as in the past. This is the only evening on which a boy can feel free to play pranks outdoors without danger of being "pinched," and it is his delight to scare passing pedestrians, ring door-bells, and carry off the neighbors' gates (after seeing that his own is unhinged and safely placed in the barn). Even if he is suspected and the next day made to remove the rubbish barricading the doors, lug back the stone carriage step, and climb a tree for the front gate, the punishment is nothing compared with the sports the pranks have furnished him.[45]

"In this era, when Americans generally lived in small communities and better knew their neighbors, it was often the local grouch who was the brunt of the Halloween mischief," recounts *Smithsonian Magazine*. "The children would cause trouble and the adults would just smile guiltily to themselves, amused by rocking chairs engineered onto rooftops, or pigs set free from sties."[46] However, such Halloween pranking spread to urban areas in the 1920s and soon morphed into outright vandalism. *Smithsonian Magazine* continues:

> When early 20th-century Americans moved into crowded urban centers—full of big city problems like poverty, segregation, and unemployment—pranking took on a new edge. Kids pulled fire alarms, threw bricks through shop windows, and painted obscenities on the principal's home. They struck out blindly against property owners, adults, and authority in general.[47]

Similarly, Halloween historian Lisa Morton writes:

> In 1933, during the height of America's Great Depression, destructive Halloween prank-playing was so virulent that many cities dubbed that year's celebration "Black Halloween." Vandalism was now described as the work of "hoodlums" rather than mischievous boys, and included sawing down telephone poles, overturning automobiles, opening fire hydrants to flood city streets and openly taunting the police. Local governments that were already struggling economically were overwhelmed, and many considered banning Halloween altogether.[48]

No longer associating Halloween with the religious celebrations of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, many adults began questioning the need for a holiday that encouraged pranks and anarchy. America's growing civic organizations—clubs like the Scouts, YMCA, Kiwanis, Rotarians, and Lions—allied with churches and schools to reframe the holiday as a time of charity.[49] Newspapers encouraged the effort, such as a 1927 piece in the *Educational Review*:

> Goblins and witches are supposed to run rampant on the evening of the last day of October. Why they

> should is not so certain, for Hallowe'en had its inception in deeds of kindness and charity, performed by good fairies, elves, and sprites whose concern was the making of folk happy rather than miserable. Poor families were wont to find baskets of food on their doorsteps instead of rubbish; woodpiles were magically sawed and split into stove lengths.[50]

In 1925 the Chicago Principals' Club initiated a campaign that soon spread across the nation. School teachers provided lessons designed to make children feel responsible for the safekeeping of their city. Chicago police were instructed to report to the Principals' Club any children caught vandalizing or pranking. And thousands of students were dispatched to serve the community by cleaning yards, painting houses, and even dressing dolls for children in hospitals. As a reward, they were invited to parties sponsored by civic groups, churches, and parent-teacher associations. The endeavor was successful, and it saved the city thousands of dollars in fire damage, thefts, and injury to property.[51]

In 1942 Fort Wayne, Indiana's mayor organized a Mayor's Club. One thousand membership cards were issued to children specially enlisted to report incidents of bad citizenship at Halloween. Members were rewarded with access to a room of horrors, erected in one of five community centers where the pitch-black gymnasium had been converted into a kind of haunted house, using wet mops, barrels, bed springs, and old tires.[52]

Other cities enlisted local boys to patrol the streets on Halloween night.[53] City administrators bought treats for the children. Decorating competitions, costume contests, and costumed parades were held. Books were published with ideas for occupying young minds throughout the week preceding Halloween in an effort to distract them from

contemplating pranking. And radio giveaway contests ensured children went directly home after Halloween parties.[54] By the end of World World II, these Halloween celebrations had become less of a diversion for pranksters and more of a genuine party for children.[55]

However, these efforts proved difficult during the Great Depression when money was scarce. "One solution was for neighbours to pool resources and create the 'house-to-house' party in which groups of children were led from one house to the next, each home hosting a different themed activity."[56] Similarly, after World War II, America was bursting with children, and large public celebrations of Halloween proved to be too expensive for some communities—and too large for others. As such, the impetus and responsibility for Halloween celebrations transitioned from the community to families and schools. Classroom and neighborhood Halloween parties replaced community celebrations, but eventually these too would give way to the growing trend of trick or treat.[57]

One of the earliest precursors to trick or treat traces back to New York's "fantasticals," described by Thanksgiving historian Diana Appelbaum as "a high-spirited extension of Guy Fawkes Day customs."[58] These were elaborate parades of adult men "whose costumes were as varied as the whims of a coquette, dazzling the eye with the variegated brilliance of a kaleidoscope."[59] By the 1880s, more than 50 fantastical groups filled the streets of New York on Thanksgiving Day with "robbers, pirates, fiends, devils, imps, fairies, priests, bishops, gypsies, flower girls, kings, clowns, princes, jesters."[60]

These fantasticals were unofficially escorted by throngs of children who drew greater public attention than the adults by the late 1920s—until they too were eclipsed by the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Parade, begun in 1924.[61] In her 1943 novel, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Betty Smith describes

these Thanksgiving Day celebrations from the perspective of poor Irish children:

> The street was jammed with masked and costumed children making a deafening din with their penny tin horns. Some kids were too poor to buy a penny mask. They had blackened their faces with burnt cork. Other children with more prosperous parents had store costumes: sleazy Indian suits, cowboy suits and cheesecloth Dutch maiden dresses. A few indifferent ones simply draped a dirty sheet over themselves and called it a costume.[62]

These costumed children demanded handouts from local shopkeepers in exchange for continued patronage. If denied, they repeatedly banged the front door in a prank called "slamming gates."[63] However, this form of begging became socially unacceptable during the Great Depression, so the young revelers focused entirely on pranking—a practice that soon migrated from Thanksgiving Day to Halloween. Historian David Skal notes how this progression of events influenced the rise of trick or treat:

> Sometime in the middle of the 1930s, enterprising householders, fed up with soaped windows and worse, began experimenting with a home-based variation on the old protection racket practiced between shopkeepers and Thanksgiving ragamuffins. Doris Hudson Moss, writing for *American Home* in 1939, told of her success, begun several years earlier, of hosting a Halloween open house for neighborhood children. "If the decorations are spooky enough, and if you provide food and a hearty welcome, you can be sure that the little rowdies from the other side of town will join in the party spirit and leave your front gate intact."[64]

In her article, Moss references "the age-old salutation of 'Trick-or-Treat!'"[65] This is the phrase's first appearance in an American mass-circulation periodical.[66] Internationally, however, the earliest record of the phrase "trick or treat" in connection with Halloween appears in the 1927 *Herald* article, "'Trick or Treat' Is Demand" in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. According to the article, "The youthful tormentors were at back door and front demanding edible plunder by the word 'trick or treat' to which the inmates gladly responded and sent the robbers away rejoicing."[67] Those who refused to provide treats truly received a trick of some sort from the would-be pranksters.[68]

By the 1930s, northern American states, like Oregon, were reporting that "young goblins and ghosts, employing modern shakedown methods, successfully worked the 'trick or treat' system.[69][70] In Montana the phrase "Madam, we are here for the usual purpose, 'trick or treat'" was reported.[71] However, it wasn't until after the Second World War that costumed children would be ubiquitous across the nation demanding of their neighbors, "Trick or treat!"

"By the 1950s, every child in America had heard about the custom. It became a child's right and privilege to go house to house on Halloween, cheerfully hollering 'trick or treat!' and filling pillowcases with apples, candy and money."[72] Children were already accustomed to receiving gifts as incentives to avoid pranking. Now every household had a choice—appease the children or risk being pranked.[73]

Freed from a sense of civic responsibility, churches gradually distanced themselves from Halloween celebrations because of a growing concern regarding the holiday's associations with the Occult. Likewise, politically correct schools would eventually ban Halloween parties and costumes because of concerns over cultural appropriation, sexualized outfits, and violence-themed accessories, such as fake weapons.[74] Nonetheless, neighborhood trick or treat

has maintained public support and has endured as a beloved and effective means of restraining and appeasing children on a night when boundary lines are blurred.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. What are the similarities in the practices of souling, guising, and mumming with that of trick-or-treating?

II. Was souling a religious activity? Why?

    A. Did the majority of those who were souling think of it as primarily a religious activity? Explain.

III. Why was Guy Fawkes Day preserved when the British Parliament banned all other festivals?

IV. Why was Guy Fawkes Day rejected by Americans during the Revolutionary War?

V. Rather than Samhain, Hallowtide, or Guy Fawkes Day, what is the more likely precursor to our contemporary Halloween holiday in America?

VI. What motivated America's play parties? Were they religious in nature?

    A. In what ways did play parties change the nature and character of Halloween?

VII. How did the mass migration of Irish to America influence America's Halloween celebrations?

VIII. How did women's periodicals influence the development of Halloween in America?

IX. Why did America's civic organizations and churches involve themselves in the way Halloween was celebrated? What was their motivation?

X. How did community efforts to prevent pranking and vandalism transform Halloween into a genuine party for children?

XI. Why did the responsibility for Halloween celebrations transfer from the community to families and schools?

XII. How did the practice of trick-or-treating transition from an isolated activity in Canada to a tradition practiced throughout America?

XIII. After having had a significant influence on the way Halloween is celebrated in America, churches began distancing themselves from Halloween celebrations because of a growing concern regarding the holiday's associations with the Occult. In hindsight do you think the church made the right decision? Why?

6. A Commercial Holiday

Boasting an average of $9 billion spent annually between 2017 and 2019,[1] Halloween has become big business and serves as the second largest decorating holiday of the year.[2] Gone are the days of disposable, paper, die-cut decorations and playful cartoon images. Inflatables, realistic plastic skeletons, foam gravestones, coffins, witches, cauldrons, jack-o-lanterns, rubber creatures of the night, and giant spider webs are ubiquitous in October. Increasingly, homeowners are incorporating into their décor animatronics, motion-sensors, spooky sounds, and eerie light effects. Some go so far as to transform their yards into elaborate hellscapes, using bloody decals, hanged men, lifelike corpses, dismembered body parts, witches, ghouls, zombies, and skeletons.

No longer is Halloween the frivolous children's holiday that it had become by the mid-20th century. It seems a consequence of commercializing Halloween has been the steady aging-up of the holiday. In some ways Halloween is returning to what it has been for most of its history—a holiday for adults.

Decorated, Halloween-themed, adult parties largely began around 1910 in America. Companies like Beistle and B. Shackman offered pre-made decorations, and Dennison's

Bogie Books were replete with detailed instructions for using Dennison products to decorate and host Halloween parties. "Almost all the imagery from that early time, from 1910–1935, the stuff was made primarily for adults, so it was scary, unsettling, and really creative," explains Mark Ledenbach, owner of the largest vintage Halloween collection in the world. "It was meant to catch your eye and unsettle you, even at a party."[3]

Interestingly, it was the invitations for these adult parties that codified the iconography of Halloween. Beautiful, sexualized witches seated on brooms, old-hag witches bent over cauldrons, black cats, jack-o-lanterns, and other classic images associated with Halloween were commonly portrayed on postcards before the widespread use of the telephone.[4] These joined with the stories published in popular periodicals to homogenize, in America, the diverse traditions and imagery surrounding Halloween. For the first time a standardized understanding of the holiday was birthed, occurring in the transition between centuries.[5]

Pin-ups also helped to standardize Halloween imagery. Serving as perhaps the holiday's last decidedly adult-oriented commercialization effort before the holiday was fully relinquished to children, the pin-up became fashionable in the 1930s and was particularly popular among World War II servicemen. October pin-ups commonly featured Hollywood starlets dressed in provocative Halloween outfits or posing with pumpkins.[6] However, sexualized and scary imagery was largely replaced with friendly-looking devils, witches, and ghosts—often portrayed as innocuous and cutesy—as Halloween morphed into a holiday geared toward children, beginning in the early-to-mid-1930s.[7]

By the late 1940s and 1950s, children ruled Halloween. The practice of trick-or-treating, which had begun in the

1920s but stalled due to the sugar rationings of World War II, had spread throughout the country. A generation of Baby Boomers had been born, and families were migrating from the cities to suburbs. Eager to meet their neighbors, families hosted open house parties with costumed neighborhood kids wandering between homes to play games and acquire treats.[8] These neighborhood parties quickly merged with the developing practice of trick-or-treating.

Favorite publications and cartoons also helped to popularize Halloween and nationalize the practice of trick-or-treating. As early as 1947, youth magazines *Jack and Jill* and *Children's Activities* featured trick-or-treating in their October issues.[9] In 1951 the cast of *Peanuts* joined the fun of carving jack-o-lanterns and dressing up to scare others for Halloween in an activity Charles Schulz called "Halloween ghosting."[10] And in 1952 Walt Disney re-popularized trick-or-treating with an eight-minute cartoon titled *Donald Duck – Trick or Treat,* which followed Witch Hazel, Donald Duck, and his nephews, Huey, Dewey, and Louie, as they taught children throughout the country how to both trick and treat on Halloween.[11]

In true American spirit entrepreneurial businesses quickly developed new ways to capitalize on the holiday's newfound tradition. The popularity of television, combined with the ability to manufacture cheap outfits and colorful plastic masks, revolutionized the costumes employed by trick-or-treaters. Soon the standard costumes of social outsiders—gypsies, hobos, bandits, and pirates—were replaced with beloved television characters.[12] Masquerading packs of children now included the likes of Little Orphan Annie, Bullwinkle, and Snow White, alongside witches and ghosts.[13]

Television supplied Americans with a common culture and readily identifiable characters. Since the 1950s, Halloween costumes have mirrored popular culture,

reflecting blockbuster movies, cartoon characters, toys, musicians, famous brands, and political scandals. Following this trend, costumes forever changed with John Carpenter's 1978 movie *Halloween*. It was this movie that inspired bloody costumes celebrating gore.[14]

In the 1950s other industries also capitalized on trick or treat. "Grocers printed branded trick or treat bags," writes Lisa Morton. "Meat producers gave out kits and booklets that included cut-out masks, motion picture and television companies produced Halloween cartoons and episodes, and even adult products like cigarettes featured trick or treat and Halloween imagery in their magazine and newspaper print ads."[15]

In 1954, Kellogg's promoted cereal snack packs in *Life Magazine* as "sweet treats for little kids!" showing a woman handing a box of Frosted Flakes to trick-or-treaters.[16] *Life Magazine* also advertised Hawaiian Punch as "treats for thirsty tricksters,"[17] Kool-Aid as "loot for the trick-n treaters,"[18] and Fleer Double Bubble with the exhortation, "Treat the Kids this Halloween with Double Bubble."[19]

Increasingly, candy became a convenient and economical treat to supply trick-or-treaters. "Small, inexpensive candies became popular, and major candy manufacturers began making smaller candy bars or bags of candy corn."[20] However, it wasn't until the 1970s that candy replaced the common spoils of cookies, cakes, nuts, fruits, and toys due to a growing urban legend and rising fears that unwrapped or homemade treats risked being poisoned (see appendix C).[21]

As the Baby Boomers who belonged to this golden age of trick-or-treating aged, many were reluctant to stop celebrating their beloved holiday. In the 1970s Halloween marketing began shifting toward adults. "Vampires were used to sell cars and stereos, pumpkins lined the borders of print ads for records and tapes, and spooky synthesized

voices sold appliances over the radio. Like Washington's birth and the Fourth of July, Halloween was becoming an annual retail season in American advertising."[22]

Seasonal Halloween stores were introduced in 1983 after a Castro Valley, California dress shop owner named Joseph Marver noticed a nearby costume shop was receiving far more business than his dress store.[23] When the costume shop relocated, Marver put his dresses into storage, filled his store with costumes for the month of October, and placed a sign on the old costume shop to redirect customers. The next year, he expanded this successful venture by leasing space in a mall and setting up what is known today as a pop-up shop.[24] Thus was born the seasonal Spirit Halloween, which Marver sold to Spencer Gifts in 1999, which managed over 1,200 stores in America by 2019.[25]

Around the same time Party City opened its first store in 1986 and programmed its entire retail cycle around Halloween, instead of Christmas.[26] Party City grew into the world's largest party-supply chain and eventually expanded its operation to include approximately 250 Halloween City pop-ups.[27] With 35,000 seasonal employees,[28] Party City remains one of Spirit Halloween's greatest competitors.[29]

Among major retail stores, Sears was the first to host a Halloween shop within the walls of its store. Chuck Martinez, a magician hired by Sears Roebuck for public events and office parties, noticed a trend at his mother's magic shop. October sales seemed to explode every year as shoppers came searching for costumes. Seeking to capitalize on this in 1978, he convinced his mother to take a mortgage on her house to finance a temporary Halloween shop within the local Sears store.[30, 31]

Within 35 days this first shop generated $89,000, and by 1984 Martinez had expanded his Halloween Shop at Sears to 360 locations.[32] Recognizing that Halloween sales were filling the retail gap between back-to-school and Christmas,

Sears bought the national chain from Martinez in 1988 for $6 million. Big chains like Walmart and Macy's soon followed suit by stocking Halloween supplies.[33, 34]

In the 1980s, Baby Boomers may have been too old to trick or treat, but they certainly weren't going to be left out of the Halloween fun. National Theme Productions reported that one of every four adults aged 18 to 40 wore a costume in 1980, and in 1986 60% of National Theme's Halloween costume rentals were to adults.[35] Trick or treat was in decline because of social fears, but adult Baby Boomer parties were on the rise. According to Lesley Bannatyne, "The Philadelphia Costume Company reported adults waiting in lines a block long for costumes that would cost them as much as $150 each."[36]

Interestingly, adult Halloween trends in the 1980s likely have the gay community to thank for their sensibilities. It may be the gay community that most encouraged society to embrace the practice of adults dressing in costumes and joining extravagant festivities. Indeed, much of the spirit behind today's decadent, drunken, and showy Halloween celebrations of inversion stems from the LGBTQ community[37]—beginning with Philadelphia's parades, in the 1940s and 1950s, of hundreds of drag queens along Locust Street, moving in and out of local bars. Within a few years, African-American gays staged their own parade between bars along South Street.[38]

On Polk Street, in San Francisco, adult drag queens usurped an annual children's costume party at Cliff's Variety store, begun in 1948. Children stood on stools to display their costumes, hoping to win Cliff's gift certificates. The winner was determined by audience applause.[39] However, as early as 1950, the festivities on Polk Street were known to be a queer party,[40] and by the 1970s adult drag queens were entering and winning the costume competition.[41]

When California repealed its sodomy laws in 1976, Polk Street filled with defiant members of the LGBTQ community, but they clashed with police who raided the event. Releasing tear gas, police arrested several participants. In response LGBTQ community leaders organized the next year's events around the budding queer scene of Castro Street, just a few blocks away. Only two years later, in 1980, 30,000 people attended the Castro Street Parade, and by 1995 it had grown to 500,000.[42]

The celebrations were raucous, bawdy, and often immodest, with some participants dressed in extravagant costumes and others partially nude. The *San Jose Mercury News* reported in 1995, "It simply got too big for its britches—although not all partygoers have bothered to wear them. Part of the event's appeal has been its disdain for good taste and conventional modesty: The only dress code has been that imposed by the chilly night air."[43]

On the other side of the country, "in New York City, a Broadway drag rock show from San Francisco, starring the Cockettes—'a spangled chaos of flesh, a seething mass of hock-shop costumes, doing their thing for freedom'[44]—staged an impromptu Halloween parade on East 9th Street" in 1971.[45] This gave rise to a parade in 1973 by a Greenwich Village mask maker and puppeteer named Ralph Lee.[46] Together with his children, Lee began walking from house to house around Washington Park displaying his products.[47]

Others quickly joined the procession, which was greatly influenced by the large homosexual population at the nearby West Village and the Halloween revels on Christopher Street—New York's prime commercial strip, which served as the heart of New York's gay culture.[48] By its third year, Theater for the New City produced the event, lengthening the parade route and increasing participation, and the next year, the Village Halloween Parade was

established as a non-profit organization producing the Greenwich parade.[49]

Costumes often revolved around satire, sexual parodies, inversion, religious taboos, and sexual liberation, making the Greenwich parade a kind of social commentary.[50] Lisa Morton writes:

> On any given Halloween, among the parade's 60,000 marchers will be drag queens, large articulated puppets, marching bands and every conceivable costume from gladiators to religious figures to giant walking condoms. The event, which draws two million attendees and is viewed on television by another million, bills itself as 'the nation's largest public Halloween celebration' and has become a major cultural landmark for New York.[51]

"Halloween went big-time in the 1970s and 1980s," according to Nicholas Rogers, "eclipsing the child-centered rituals of trick-or-treating with what another journalist described as 'escapist extravaganzas' that 'more resembled Mardi Gras than the candy-and-apple surfeits of yesteryear."[52] Gay parades were established wherever the gay community felt secure enough to celebrate their sexuality and affirm their right to public space.[53]

By the 1980s, gay enclaves in places like Key West, West Hollywood and Greenwich Village were hosting public, annual, Halloween street parties that provided communities of outsiders opportunities to safely cross-dress and adopt personas—some of them costumed—for interacting with the "straight" world.[54] According to Artistic/Producing Director of the Greenwich Parade Jeanne Fleming, "In many ways, at that time, this was Pride."[55] As such, Halloween has long served as the "gay Christmas"—or as lesbian poet and scholar Judy Grahn put it, the "great gay holiday."[56]

According to Nicholas Rogers, "It has been the gay community that has most flamboyantly exploited Halloween's potential as a transgressive festival, as one that operates outside or on the margins of orthodox time, space, and hierarchy. Indeed, it is the gay community that has been arguably most responsible for Halloween's adult rejuvenation."[57]

With the increased adult interest in Halloween, Coors Light Beer, a smaller beer brand not yet available coast to coast, saw an opportunity to "own" a holiday and counter their competitors' sales around popular beer-buying holidays like Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day.[58] Coors' first Halloween promotional campaign began in 1983 with a werewolf-like creature called BeerWolf, but it wasn't until the company hired Elvira in 1986 that the endeavor truly succeeded.[59] Cassandra Peterson's persona, "Elvira, Mistress of the Dark," is best remembered for her role as hostess of *Elvira's Movie Macabre*. With life-sized cardboard cutouts of the beautiful Elvira, Coors Halloween sales surged, eventually surpassing Superbowl Sunday and Saint Patrick's Day in beer sales.[60] And by 1995 Elvira gained the moniker "Queen of Halloween."[61]

Adult costume parties, public festivities, and beverages have aged-up Halloween while filling corporate coffers. With the reclamation of Halloween as an adult holiday, perhaps it was inevitable that haunted attractions would also age-up. Originally, these were designed as an alternative to trick or treat, intended to keep children from mischief during Halloween.

During the Great Depression, a 1937 party pamphlet suggested distracting would-be Halloween pranksters by providing a "trail of terror":

> An outside entrance leads to a rendezvous with ghosts and witches in the cellar or attic. Hang old fur, strips of

> raw liver on walls, where one feels his way to dark steps ... Weird moans and howls come from dark corners, damp sponges and hair nets hung from the ceiling touch his face ... At one place "Tige" who is a guard dressed as a dog, suddenly jumps out at him, barking and growling ... Doorways are blockaded so that guests must crawl through a long dark tunnel ... At the end he hears a plaintive "meow" and sees a black cardboard cat outlined in luminous paint.[62]

Lisa Morton writes:

> The guidebook also suggests that different parts of the maze may have different themes: "Ghouls Gaol", "Mad House", "Tunnel of Terrors", and "Dead Man's Gulch" are mentioned. Other tips from this pre-Second World War guide include a chair wired to deliver a mild electric shock, the rental of a creepy abandoned house to hold the event in, and "Autopsy", in which guests are seated before a backlit screen behind which fake surgery is performed.[63]

In 1971, a civic group called the United States Junior Chamber, also known as the Jaycees, began sponsoring outdoor versions of these "trails of terror" to raise money for charity.[64] According to David Skal, "Charity-based charnel houses were crucially important to the exponential growth of Halloween as a modern national obsession."[65] "By the 1980s, community centers across North America were converting their premises into temporary haunted houses," but the popularity of these attractions gave rise to firms, such as Nightscape Productions, Haunted Hayrides Incorporated, and Elm Street Hauntrepreneurs—for-profit enterprises that eclipsed the efforts of community centers and charitable societies by 1991.[66] However, it was the debut

of Disneyland's Haunted Mansion in 1969 that truly transformed these experiences into an entire industry to become what Edward Douglas, a soundtrack creator for haunted attractions, calls "the grand-daddy of what we do … the very first haunted house that started it all, and certainly the soundtrack that started it all for what we do."[67]

The Haunted Mansion is designed in the style of the Evergreen House alongside the Winchester Mystery House and employs a complex series of illusions to project and shape ethereal images. The centerpiece of the attraction is the Grand Hall—a 90-foot-long ballroom sequence of dancing ghouls at a birthday party.[68] Lisa Morton writes:

> What made the Haunted Mansion so successful and so influential, however, was not its similarity to haunted houses and "dark rides" (that is, tawdry carnival haunted houses) of the past, but its use of startling new technologies and effects. Ghosts were no longer simply sheets hung in a tree, but were instead actual shimmering translucent figures that moved, spoke and sang. A witch wasn't just a rubber-masked figure bent over a fake cauldron, but a completely realistic bodiless head floating in a crystal ball, conducting a complex séance.[69]

Four years later, in 1973, a nearby amusement park to Disneyland called Knotts Berry Farm "offered one night of Halloween-themed attractions, mainly by adding set dressing and actors to their existing 'Calico Mine Train' ride."[70] This was America's first recorded Halloween-themed park event.[71] Over the years, this successful venture continued to expand, covering most of the 160-acre park for the month of October and including celebrity stage shows. Custom mazes and "scare zones" were also added—large,

themed, outdoor areas that visitors must pass through to reach other areas of the park.[72]

The success of Disneyland and Knott's haunted attractions prompted Universal Studios to introduce "Fright Nights" in 1991, which was changed to "Halloween Horror Nights" in 1992. Also in 1991, David Bertolino established Spookyworld in Massachusetts, calling it "America's Halloween Theme Park."[73] Today, haunted attractions at theme parks are common, such as "Phantom Fright Nights" at Kennywood, "Fright Fest" at Six Flags Great Adventure, and "Haunt at Halloweekends" at Cedar Point.

Moreover, throughout America, thousands of for-profit haunted houses have been established. In the span of only a few weeks, these commercial ventures can each attract as many as 40,000 visitors.[74] Many of these use the same advanced technologies originally designed for Universal, Disney, and Hollywood movies and are constantly improving their offerings.[75] By 2010 the aged-up haunted attractions industry claimed $6.5 billion in annual sales.[76]

This adult-oriented focus on Halloween does not appear to be fading with the sunsetting of the Baby Boomer generation. Rather, Generation X and Millennials have readily embraced Halloween as a holiday for all ages. Approximately 70% of Americans above the age of 18 participate in America's Halloween celebrations.[77]

It certainly appears that the commercialization of Halloween has guided the holiday's most recent transformation, restoring its mature themes. Perhaps this is because Halloween has always reflected our social and religious values. "Halloween, with its emphasis on identity, horror and transgression, can tell us about who we want to be and what we fear becoming," writes associate professor of sociology Linus Owens. "Historian Nicholas Rogers has argued that many of the trends and rituals of the holiday are actually tied to conflicting social values."[78]

Halloween has always been a holiday in flux, endeavoring to hold adult fears in tension with childhood innocence. This tension is decidedly lopsided today, making one thing clear: *Halloween is no longer a children's holiday.*[79, 80] Certainly, there are elements that remain child-friendly, but increasingly, Halloween is dominated by hellscapes, horror, and adult parties. Today, alcohol is as important as candy to the Halloween industry, and haunted attractions border on being downright terrifying.[81] With these changes there has certainly come a shift in the general atmosphere and spirit of Halloween celebrations.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. In what ways did the commercialization of Halloween age-up the holiday?

II. How did invitations for adult Halloween parties influence the development of Halloween?

III. How did a generation of Baby Boomers and the rise of the suburbs influence the development of Halloween?

IV. Prior to television, Halloween costumes focused upon social outsiders, such as gypsies, hobos, bandits, and pirates. Why was television transformative in the way Americans celebrate Halloween?

V. How did the reluctance of the Baby Boomers to stop celebrating their beloved holiday influence the development of Halloween?

VI. Nicholas Rogers made the statement, "It is the gay community that has been arguably most responsible for Halloween's adult rejuvenation." Why do adult Halloween trends in the 1980s likely have the gay community to thank for their sensibilities?

VII. In what ways did Halloween serve as the LGBTQ community's early gay pride event?

   A. What is it about Halloween that the LGBTQ community sees as conducive to celebrating their alternative lifestyles?

VIII. Do you think it is appropriate for Christians to find amusement from haunted attractions?

IX. Haunted houses were originally designed as a means of distracting Halloween pranksters. Does this change the way you think about the appropriateness of haunted attractions? Why?

X. It is common to hear Halloween excused as a children's holiday centered around trick or treat, but approximately 70% of Americans above the age of 18 celebrate the holiday. Should this change the way we think about the cultural significance of Halloween? Why?

7. A Night of Horrors

There is something almost cathartic in horror, according to cultural historian David Skal. It offers a temporary coping mechanism for dealing with the challenges and trauma of life by providing a means of "processing unpleasant information in such a way that we don't have to look at it too directly."[1] Given that Halloween itself has long fulfilled the role of helping society cope with its mortality, perhaps it is not surprising that horror and Halloween have come together.[2]

As a holiday of inversion, Halloween beckons dark, creepy, and sinister entities to emerge from their shadows where they can be confronted and even celebrated. Stealthy creatures of the night, such as bats, owls, cats, and spiders became early icons for society's collective fear of the unknown. They were a kind of otherworldly creature, reminiscent of faeries and demons. Often, they were also associated with witches who became the face of evil in a Christianized Europe, beginning in the 1480s.

For centuries few things were more terrifying than a companion of devils with the ability to harness the powers of the supernatural realm. However, fear of witches was eventually replaced by existential threats to society, such as global war, nuclear weapons, and class warfare. Skal notes

that when the promises of the Roaring Twenties collapsed into the Great Depression, Americans' faith in progress and science—those things which promised to improve life—was severely challenged. It is not coincidental that the 1930s gave rise to mad scientists whose creations wreaked havoc.

David Skal observes, "The image of the Frankenstein monster is a proletariat image—asphalt spreader boots and work clothes; he's like a mute symbol of the whole working class that's been abandoned by the people who were supposed to take care of him."[3] Similarly, the atomic monsters of the 1950s were society's reaction to the war and the anxieties it produced. "There were no real giant radioactive monsters, but there were giant anxieties during the Cold War. So the fallout shelter kind of replaced Dracula's crypt."[4] However, vampires experienced a resurgence in the 1980s when the AIDS epidemic prompted people to contemplate blood, mysterious illnesses, and sexual transgressions.[5]

Even America's obsession with zombies may be rooted in societal fears. "I think now zombies represent the idea of the other," explains Skal, "the rampaging hordes of zombies—they represent any outsider you want. We're a very polarized society culturally and politically now. One thing we see in the zombie formula is the haves versus the have-nots—those who have life versus those who don't, locked in a death struggle."[6]

At times these monsters have been terrifying, and at others they have been comical caricatures, such as the *Addams Family* or the *Munsters*. A populace who had lived through the Cuban Missile Crisis, had practiced duck-and-cover drills during the Cold War, and had watched President Kennedy and his accused assassin shot to death on live television sought relief by reimaging history's menacing monsters.[7]

Many of these monsters were brought to life on the silver screen, the most famous movies belonging to the Universal Monsters. This is the name given to a series of horror, suspense, and science fiction movies made by Universal Studios between 1923 and 1960.[8] These international hits helped to codify how historic monsters should look, sound, and behave.[9]

The Universal Monsters moved to television in 1957, where they were an immediate success. Screen Gems, the television division of Columbia Pictures, contracted with Universal-International to distribute to television 550 films made before August 1, 1948. The first package for distribution included 52 titles marketed under the heading *Shock!* Most of these were horror films, such as *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), and *The Invisible Man* (1932).[10]

By mid-November 1957, *Shock!* had been sold to 78 television stations across the country. Billed by these stations as "Shock Theatre," it proved to be enormously successful. According to an article in *Billboard,* television stations experienced a 38–1,125% boost in ratings.[11]

Naturally, Screen Gems built upon this success with the May 1958 release, *Son of Shock*. This package was a combination of Universal and Columbia horror films, and it continued to air on various stations until 1967. It also gave rise to a cultural obsession with monsters that lasted throughout much of the 1960s.[12]

Universal Monsters and Halloween seemed to be a perfect match. Soon Halloween was awash with Dracula, Frankenstein, and other monster-movie masks and costumes. Often these trick-or-treaters concluded their Halloween festivities by enjoying a monster movie at home.[13]

For a season monsters appeared everywhere. Entire magazines were dedicated to them, beginning with *Famous Monsters of Filmland* in 1958.[14] Plastic model kits for classic

monsters became available in 1961. The song "Monster Mash" reached number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in 1962. Frankenstein appeared with Bugs Bunny and the Tasmanian Devil in the 1964 cartoon, "The Devil and Mr. Hare." Also in 1964, *The Munsters* television sitcom spoofed the Universal Monsters. The classic stop-motion animation *Mad Monster Party* was released in 1967. And General Mills introduced the cereal lines Count Chocula and Franken Berry in 1971.[15, 16]

Incredibly, America's monster craze tamed and commercialized history's most fearsome, otherworldly creatures. For a season, they became playful and sometimes good-natured. However, with the aging-up of Halloween, American culture is once more revisiting these monsters' dark heritage. Increasingly, their 20th-century veneer is being removed, and their true nature is re-emerging.

Vampires

"Throughout the whole vast shadowy world of ghosts and demons there is no figure so terrible, no figure so dreaded and abhorred, yet dight with such fearful fascination, as the vampire, who is himself neither ghost nor demon, but yet who partakes the dark natures and possesses the mysterious and terrible qualities of both," writes literary scholar and clergyman Montague Summers in *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin.* "He is neither dead nor alive; but living in death. He is an abnormality; the androgyne in the phantom world; a pariah among fiends."[17]

Often spectral in its earliest form, such as the Seven Spirits of Mesopotamia or the Chinese Ch'ing Shih, the vampire inhabits the realm between the tangible and the intangible. Accounts of supernatural creatures who rob others of their life force—be it sexual energy, psychic energy,

youth, health, or blood—date back to antiquity. Historian David Skal writes:

> In ancient Greece, the *lamia* was conceived as a female demon that drank the blood of children and later, in poetry, destroyed men by way of sex. The theme is repeated in the Hebrew legend of Lilith, Adam's malignant first wife. Homer's *The Odyssey* describes spirits of the underworld who subsist on blood. In Roman mythology, the *strix* was a malevolent bird that fed on flesh as well as blood (the Romanian word for vampire is *strigoi*). In Egypt, the death-wielding warrior goddess Sekhmet had an unquenchable thirst for blood, and Anubis, the jackal-headed deity of the underworld, presided over burial rites that included elaborate provisions for the dead, who were believed to be eternally hungry.[18]

Although vampires have assumed many forms throughout history, modern depictions derive largely from medieval Slavic traditions that portray the vampire as an animated human corpse who haunts, torments, and preys upon the living. Professor John Scoffern defines the vampire as a "living, mischievous, and murderous dead body."[19]

Unlike zombies, vampires retain their intelligence and autonomy in their undead state, but they are accursed and bereft of the peace afforded other corpses. Most importantly, they are driven by an insatiable lust for life—predominantly symbolized in the drinking of blood.

"Most archaeologists now think that a belief in vampires arose from common misunderstandings about diseases such as tuberculosis, and from a lack of knowledge about the process of decomposition."[20] David Skal explains:

> Before decomposition, corpses are often bloated with fluid, giving the appearance of having been fed. Eyes remain open. Blood [actually a dark "purge fluid" that may be easily mistaken for blood[21]] collects in the oral cavity, sometimes running from the mouth. The death rictus accentuates the teeth, and the shrinking of the gums can give the appearance of extended canines. Aspiration of methane gas can easily be mistaken for groans, and the occasional combustion of the same as an expression of hellfire.[22]

Likewise, infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, porphyria, pellagra, and rabies, account for many of the traditions surrounding vampires.[23] Chief Historian of the National Geographic Society's Archives Mark Jenkins writes in *Vampire Forensics*, "The one constant in the evolution of vampire legend has been its close association with disease."[24] According to journalist Becky Little, "Trying to kill vampires, or prevent them from feeding, was a way for people to feel as though they had some control over disease."[25]

Indeed, vampires have frequently served as metaphors for society. When Bram Stoker wrote his infamous novel *Dracula* in the late 19th century, Britain was dominated by the sense that the country was in irretrievable decline.[26] "The fear of criminality, infection, corruption, the disintegration of values and morals, foreign invasion and degeneration was omnipresent throughout Britain" because of "the racial Other, who invades the country to disrupt the domestic order and enfeeble the host race,[27]" writes Jan Hurta. In Stoker's novel Count Dracula "embodies the Victorian-feared foreign wellspring of evil and corruption."[28]

Likewise, the unofficial film adaptation of *Dracula* titled *Nosferato* utilized "the vampire as a metaphor of the plaguelike destruction of Germany in World War I."[29] The film's art director, Albin Grau, described the war as a

"monstrous event which swooped down on the earth like a cosmic vampire to drink the blood of millions and millions of men."[30]

Whether presented as a metaphor or as reality, the universal constant that has spanned civilizations throughout history is that vampires are inherently evil. Montague Summers writes, "The Vampire is one who has led a life of more than ordinary immorality and unbridled wickedness; a man of foul, gross and selfish passions, of evil ambitions, delighting in cruelty and blood."[31] Vampires are often said to have practiced black magic in life, committed egregious crimes, or been denied proper burial rites and rituals.[32] Whatever their origin, there was nothing romantic about these creatures for millennia.

This changed in the 1970s. David Skal notes that Anne Rice's novel "*Interview with a Vampire* marked the beginning of a romantic vampire renaissance in fiction, theatre and film that continues to the present day."[33] This renaissance birthed an entire genre, culminating in the national phenomenon of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series.

Modern efforts to rehabilitate such a loathsome creature are troubling because they change nothing about its murderous nature—only its methods and motivations. Even sympathetic vampires remain evil as no troubling of the soul can justify murder. It is the height of pride and unmitigated selfishness to steal another's life force to revitalize oneself. As such, the vampire remains an incarnation of evil that seeks only to steal, kill, and destroy.

Werewolves

In his book, *The Werewolf,* Montague Summers defines the werewolf as "a human being, man, woman or child (more often the first), who either voluntarily or involuntarily

changes or is metamorphosed into the apparent shape of a wolf, and who is then possessed of all the characteristics, the foul appetites, ferocity, cunning, the brute strength, and swiftness of that animal."[34] Like the vampire, werewolves are driven by an insatiable bloodlust. Indeed, Slavonic tradition maintains that any man who has been a werewolf in life will almost certainly become a vampire in death.[35] Often, almost no distinction is made between witches, werewolves, and vampires in early legends.[36]

Perhaps the defining characteristic distinguishing werewolves from vampires is that the werewolf is not dead. Although the same word is used to identify vampires and werewolves in Greece (*vrykolakes*), there are believed to be two distinct *vrykolakes*—"the one sort being men already dead (the vampire), the other living men who were subject to a weird somnambulism which sent them forth ravening, and this particularly on moonlight nights."[37] According to some legends, werewolf *vrykolakes* were condemned to live in their tombs, coming out only during the full moon to satisfy their thirst for human blood.[38]

Transformation into beasts is common in mythology and witchcraft.[39] Were-creatures of all sorts appear in legends throughout history and across the world, but it seems that shapeshifting has largely been defined by the predatory beasts of each respective region—indicating that the phenomenon may have more to do with the nature of the perpetrator than the physical form. In his book, *The Werewolf,* Montague Summers documents the global shapeshifting phenomenon:

> In modern Greece the transformation into a boar, the were-boar, άγριογούρουνο, is believed.[40] The Wallachians dread the *priccolitsh*, the weredog.[41][42]
>
> In Abyssinia and in the Egyptian Soudan the wizards are credited with the power of becoming

hyenas at will.[43][44][45] Throughout that vast continent man metamorphoses himself into many other animals, the leopard, the jaguar, the lion, the elephant, the crocodile, the alligator, and even into fish such as the shark.[46][47][48][49][50][51][52][53][54]

Throughout India, but more particularly in the northern Himalayan districts, the weretiger prowls; in Java, Borneo, and the Malay States there are wereleopards to boot.[55][56][57][58][59][60] The weretiger is also known in China and Japan, but here the werefox is both feared and honoured. The werebadger and the weredog are also sorcerers, sometimes it may be friendly sorcerers, in animal shape.[61][62][63][64][65][66][67]

The Toradjas of the Central Celebes give their wizards a yet wider range of metamorphosis which includes cats, crocodiles, wild pigs, apes, deer, and buffaloes.[68] In the West Indies we return to the transformation into a hyena.[69] In North America we meet once more the werewolf as also the werebuffalo.[70]

Of old in Central America, in Mexico and Peru, men knew the weretiger, the were-eagle, and the wereserpent.[71][72] In South America generally to-day the warlock is generally credited to shift his shape to the jaguar, but there are also tales of weretigers, were-eagles, and wereserpents.[73][74][75][76] The witches of Chili are credited with the power of turning themselves into a chonchon, a bird resembling a vulture which flies by night, whilst others assume the appearance of the calchona, described as a beast with long grey hair, something between a goat and a prairie dog.[77], 78

Modern werewolf lore derives largely from Europe, where the wolf was the most fearsome predator. Summers writes, “For long centuries throughout all Europe there was

no wilder brute, no more dreaded enemy of man than the savage wolf, whose ferocity was a quick and lively menace to the countryside such as perhaps we cannot in these later days by any stretch of imagination even faintly realize and apprehend."[79]

The origin, the reality, and the nature of werewolf metamorphosis has long been debated. Modern researchers have attributed diseases such as hypertrichosis or porphyria, mental disorders such as lycanthropy, and psychedelic ointments and drugs to the werewolf's origin, but the primary explanation in European history has been witchcraft.[80, 81] Sometimes witches or demons were said to transform the human body, sometimes others merely perceived the human as a wolf, and sometimes it was said that the human's soul left the body to inhabit that of a wolf.[82, 83] Regardless, the werewolf was universally considered to be "one of the most terrible and depraved of all bond-slaves of Satan."[84]

Witches

Witchcraft has been practiced from time immemorial. Although practiced by both sexes, witchcraft is largely associated with women, whose imagery has varied between seductive enchantress, naturalist, hook-nosed old hag, winged harpy, and the screech-owl-like strix that feeds upon the flesh of babies.[85] According to the 15th-century witch-hunting manual *Malleus Maleficarum*, women are more susceptible to the wiles of the devil:

> Just as through the first defect in their intelligence they are more prone to abjure the faith; so through their second defect of inordinate passions they search for, brood over, and inflict various vengeances, either by

> witchcraft, or by some other means. Wherefore it is no wonder that so great a number of witches exist in this sex.[86]

Indeed, the modern archetype for witches is largely derived from pre-scientific, post-Christian Europe where witches were not only considered willing servants of the devil but often his sexual cohorts.[87] Witches were characterized by psychedelic drugs, complicated spells, frolics with demons, and sexual perversions. It was even said:

> Certain wicked women, turned back to Satan, seduced by demonic illusions and phantasms, believe of themselves and profess to ride upon certain beasts in the nighttime hours with Diana, the goddess of the pagan, or Herodias, and an innumerable multitude of women, and to traverse great spaces of the earth in the silence of the dead of night, and to be subject to her laws as of a Lady, and on fixed nights be called to her service.[88]

The power of the witch was only matched by her wickedness. Bishop Burchard of Worms writes in his *Decretum*, "Certain women possess the ability to propel flesh and blood Doubles of themselves to roam for great distances, committing evil deeds, killing people, eating them—placing pieces of wood or straw in the place of their hearts, then reanimating them."[89]

Believed to be capable of supernatural feats, such as creating werewolves, commanding evil spirits, and controlling the weather, witches are powerful figures who bridge the natural world and the spirit realm. They have long served as prime culprits for all things unexplainable, fearsome, and evil. As artist and writer Deanna Petherbridge

notes, "Witches are the scapegoats on which the evil of society is projected."[90]

Zombies

The term "zombie" originated in Haiti as a projection of the African slaves' relentless misery and subjugation. Haitian slaves believed that dying would release their souls back to Africa, where they could be free; however, those who committed suicide would be denied this freedom. Instead, they would be condemned to wander the Hispaniola plantations for eternity as an undead slave—a soulless zombie.[91]

Over time the zombie became a part of Haiti's folklore and was incorporated into the fringes of the Vodou religion. Anyone who died unnaturally, such as through murder, suicide, or a tragic accident, lingered in their graves apart from their ancestors until the gods approved. During this time, souls were vulnerable to powerful sorcerers who could sometimes entrap the soul in a bottle, granting them control over the soul's undead body. Thus, zombies became the mindless and pathetic slaves of shamans and Vodou priests who reanimated corpses to accomplish their nefarious tasks.[92]

Although the Haitian zombie was depicted in the 1932 Bela Lugosi horror film *White Zombie*, the European and American zombie archetype, instead, derives largely from the Roman revenant. Often violent and wicked in life, or tragically murdered, revenants were said to be the reanimated corpses of restless spirits who felt their work in the land of the living was unfinished. Professor Geller writes, "It is thought that their spirits are so dissatisfied that they are able to reanimate their bodies and dig their way out of the graves they were interred inside."[93]

Although revenants needed no sustenance to survive, they often drunk the blood of their victims. These revenants haunted or killed the living and spread disease by night, but during the day they were forced to retreat to their graves, where they slept in a state of suspended animation. The only way to kill this undead creature was to decapitate it during the day, stake the heart, and burn the corpse.

The bodies of revenants were partially decayed but not beyond the point of recognition. Geller expounds:

> In addition to having a terrible odor, the revenant is said to have rotting teeth and sunken eyes that are thought to glow red. The fingernails of a revenant are described as being bloody and jagged from the tremendous effort it took to dig themselves out of their graves. Its clothes are usually in a similar state of decay and destruction as they are often torn in the process of the corpse escaping from its coffin.
>
> The body of the revenant is a fearful sight to behold. It is often said to be missing significant chunks of flesh that reveal its bones and internal organs. If the revenant did have skin, it was frequently reported to hang from the lifeless limbs of the creature in shreds. Those who were unfortunate enough to have seen revenants in person also reported these creatures as having maggots and worms inside their open wounds. These maggots and worms were also said to be found in other openings in the body such as the eyes and mouth.[94]

This depiction of the walking dead became the archetype for the two films credited with popularizing the zombie in modern culture. George Romero's 1968 movie *Night of the Living Dead,* and his 1978 movie *Dawn of the Dead,* featured walking corpses lumbering stiffly away from

their graves with an indiscriminate desire to eat human flesh. However, it wasn't until the 1985 movie *Return of the Living Dead* that zombies developed a unique taste for brains.

Perhaps history's best-known zombie comes from the pages of Mary Shelley's book, *Frankenstein,* which illustrates her society's anxieties concerning science, technology, and the nature of life. Indeed, the zombie has often been employed as a creative metaphor for philosophizing and critiquing culture. Most recently, the zombie apocalypse genre, which was launched with the 2002 movie *28 Days Later*, has used zombies to represent the fear of a mass contagion.

Whatever the metaphor, throughout history zombies have portrayed mankind's greatest and most persistent fears. Inherently sinister and destructive beings, zombies are a form of evil personified.

Ghosts

In the Western European tradition, "ghost" referred to the essence of life, rather than survival after death, until about 1590 A.D.[95] This is why old-English Christians referred to the Holy Spirit of God as the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, the notion that the spirits of deceased humans can interact with the living appears to be a universal concept among civilizations dating back to time immemorial. Instead of ghosts, these are referred to as "shades," "phantoms," "spirits," "apparitions," and "specters."

Chinese tradition speaks of hungry ghosts, or *pretas*, which are the spirits of the wicked who are barred from heaven and condemned to wander as ghosts.[96] Alternatively, Lisa Morton notes that the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* teaches that "feeling anger at one's successors or attachment to

material goods during the moment of judgment may lead to rebirth as a *preta*"[97]—a dreadful fate for anyone:

> *Pretas* are horrid monsters ... They have long bristly hairs, arms and legs like skeletons. Their voluminous bellies can never be filled, because their mouths are as narrow as a needle's eye. Hence they are always tormented by furious hunger. Their colour, blue, black or yellow, is rendered more hideous still by filth and dirt. They are also eternally vexed by unquenchable thirst. No more but once in a hundred thousand years do they hear the word water, but when at last they find it, it immediately becomes urine and mud. Some devour fire and tear the flesh from dead bodies or from their own limbs; but they are unable to swallow the slightest bit of it because of the narrowness of their mouths.[98]

Although not always evil, ghosts in nearly every civilization are commonly portrayed as sinister entities who may be associated with particular locations. To the Navajo:

> Ghosts were terrifying creatures called *chindi*. The good parts of the deceased moved on, but the evil parts were left behind as *chindi*, which could cause sickness or death to those unlucky enough to encounter them. Because *chindi* might linger where the owner's death had occurred, Navajos abandoned any house or *hogan* where someone had died, and they avoided ever speaking a dead person's name.[99]

By the mid-19th century the nature of ghosts had evolved. Within the burgeoning Spiritualism movement, ghosts were considered to be friendly spirits of deceased loved ones who could deliver messages and answer questions via mediums.

Since then, society's conception of ghosts has wavered from malevolent specters to comical companions. Nowhere is this more evident than in film.

Ghosts have been a staple of movies since Geores Melies' short film *The Devil's Castle,* produced two years after the first motion picture.[100] Since then, films such as *The Haunting of Hill House, The Amityville Horror,* and *The Shining* have terrified audiences, while *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken, Ghostbusters,* and *Beetlejuice* have amused viewers. Perhaps America's most endeared ghostly film companion is Caspar, the friendly ghost who debuted in 1945 and has since been with the public non-stop in cartoons and movies.[101]

Accounts of ghostly encounters frequently oscillate between evil and benign. Despite our affinity for some ghosts, there remain plenty of specters who remind us of their dark lineage. Today, ghosts are feared more often than welcomed.

These monsters share a dark nature, and the further one recedes into history, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish vampires, werewolves, witches, zombies, and ghosts. For instance, werewolves, not properly killed, were once said to return as revenants who roam battlefields, drinking the blood of soldiers before returning to their graves in the morning.[102] Over time, however, each of these monsters developed distinct identities with each representing a different facet of mankind's effort to grapple with its greatest fears and to make sense of the transition between this life and the next. Metaphor, superstition, primitive science, and popular culture have shaped these creatures of the night into unique and complex icons who both invoke terror and assist mankind in confronting its fears.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. In what ways is horror cathartic?

II. When the Roaring Twenties collapsed into the Great Depression, Americans' faith in progress and science—those things which promised to improve life—was severely challenged. How did this fuel America's obsession with monsters?

III. Vampires have assumed many forms throughout history. From where are our modern depictions of vampires largely derived?

    A. How does this depiction differ from vampires in other regions of the world?

IV. For millennia there was nothing romantic about vampires. How did this change, and why are modern efforts to rehabilitate such a loathsome creature troubling?

V. How might misunderstandings regarding disease and a lack of knowledge about the process of decomposition have given rise to our vampire lore?

VI. Our modern werewolf lore derives largely from Europe, where the wolf was the most fearsome

predator. What are some of the popular theories regarding the reality and nature of werewolf metamorphosis?

VII. What is the zombie's relationship to the Vodou religion?

A. The term "zombie" may originate in Haiti, but the European and American zombie archetype is derived from the Roman revenant. What defined and motivated the Roman revenant?

VIII. The further one recedes into history, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish between vampires, werewolves, witches, zombies, and ghosts. What do you think might be the significance of this?

8. An Even Darker Heritage

Halloween's modern ensemble of monsters is the product of thousands of years of folklore, human experience, and creative imaginations. Nevertheless, it is surprising how many diverse cultures, dating back to time immemorial, have a shared belief in the same, otherworldly creatures. Such commonality indicates the original source material for these horrors may be rooted in a shared cultural experience. Anthropologist Judd Burton suspects this experience may trace back to a race of giants referenced in both the Bible and Jewish literature as the Nephilim.

Born from the union of human women and rebellious angels identified as sons of God, the Nephilim were a supernatural race of giants referenced in Genesis 6:1–4:[1]

> *Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. The sons of God saw the beautiful women and took any they wanted as their wives. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years." In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women,*

> *they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.*

Although not the inspired Word of God, a 3rd-century Jewish history and theological commentary titled *The Book of Enoch* recounts how some of these giants "consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood."[2]

Eventually condemned for their atrocities, God prophesied that these giants would become demons who need no food to sustain themselves, but who suffer an insatiable hunger and thirst, and who prey upon the living, according to *The Book of Enoch*:

> And now, the giants, who are produced from the spirits and flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on the earth shall be their dwelling.
>
> Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men, and from the holy Watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth, and evil spirits shall they be called.
>
> [As for the spirits of heaven, in heaven shall be their dwelling, but as for the spirits of the earth which were born upon the earth, on the earth shall be their dwelling.]
>
> And the spirits of the giants afflict, oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, and work destruction on the earth, and cause trouble: they take no food, but nevertheless hunger and thirst, and cause offences. And these spirits shall rise up against the children of

> men and against the women, because they have proceeded from them (*brackets in the original*).[3]

Could this be the true origin of our monster lore? Perhaps this is why the oldest legends make virtually no distinction between vampires, werewolves, and zombies—and why these monsters have often been associated with giants. Judd Burton writes:

> Other civilizations had analogous beliefs in gigantic vampires. The Assyrians and Babylonians, for example, believed very strongly in the existence of vampires in general, and certainly in a gigantic species. Their own texts speak of these monsters who are of "giant strength and giant tread," and who "rage against mankind" and "spill their blood like rain, devouring their flesh (and) sucking their veins."[4] In all there were seven gigantic vampires in the Mesopotamian tradition.[5] The Apache and the Comanche believe in the mammoth Cannibal Owl, who is a sort of Bogey Man in their legends and is said to devour ill-behaved children.[6][7][8] In Greek mythology, the Cyclops Polyphemus—himself of divine and human heritage—devoured Odysseus' men in the *Odyssey*.[9] The Maya worshipped a giant bat god named Camazotz, who had the body of a man and the head of a bat.[10] Camazotz was associated with night, death, and blood sacrifice. These few diverse examples illustrate the vampiric nature of giants in world mythology, thereby linking them also to the Biblical narrative.[11]

The accuracy of the Jewish account in *The Book of Enoch* regarding the Nephilim and their character is unknown, but it is intriguing how similar their assessment of these giants is to the general sentiments of Israel's neighboring

civilizations. Regardless, the Bible teaches the reality of the Nephilim—whoever or whatever they may be—establishing them as historical reality. Scripture's account is far less detailed, but it does attribute to them a supernatural origin rooted in an ancient evil (Gen. 6:1–4).

At this point, it is worth questioning why anyone would celebrate or endeavor to contact these spirits at Halloween if they come from the creatures produced by one of history's first insurrections when humans and angels united in their rebellion against God's created design and purpose. If we have any reason to believe the historical evidence that these are the evil spirits and demons described in the Bible, then they should be rejected, not solicited. Halloween ought to remind us of God's judgment against such evil.

Indeed, it was at the time of Halloween that the Nephilim experienced God's judgment—along with the rest of sinful humanity (Gen. 6–9). Pastor Frank Humphrey writes:

> Genesis 7:1 states that it was on the 17th day of the 2nd month that the vast cataclysm of the Flood erupted on the earth. On the Old Testament calendar employed in Genesis (similar to the modern Jewish calendar) the first month of the year runs from mid-September to mid-October (cf. Genesis 26:12 where sowing and reaping take place in the same year, thus indicating an autumn New Year). Therefore, the commencement of the Flood would be the end of October or the beginning of November.[12]

All life upon the face of the earth was extinguished in the flood because of its affinity for wickedness (Gen. 7:21–23). Only Noah and seven others who took refuge in the ark survived this event, eventually stepping foot upon a renewed earth one year later. Thus, the end of October and the

beginning of November marked a time when all life was lost due to mankind's unmitigated rebellion against God. However, it also marked a time of new beginnings. Author of *The Flood Reconsidered,* Frederick Filby, concludes:

> Thus the old world perished in November and a year later a new era commenced in the same month. Both of these facts are indelibly enshrined in the memory of the human race. To many people around the world November brings the Day of the Dead. In a number of ancient and primitive calendars November also brings a New Year at a time which has neither solstice nor equinox nor astronomical event to justify it.[13]

Numerous civilizations have preserved distorted remnants of the flood experience in their mythology.[14, 15, 16] Filby writes:

> It has long been known that the ship of Isis and the chest or coffin of Osiris which floated on the waters for a year are confused Egyptian recollections of the Flood. Plutarch says that Osiris was shut up in his box and set afloat "…on the seventeenth day of the month Athyr, when nights were growing long and the days decreasing." … In Plutarch's time Athyr did in fact coincide with October-November.[17]

Interestingly, the month of Athyr is a variant of the name Hathor, the Egyptian goddess who guarded the tombs of the dead. More importantly, Plutarch's account corresponds with the Bible's timing of the flood, provided in Genesis 7:1.

Fragments of Europe's flood memory have a particularly interesting intersection with Halloween in the legends of King Arthur. According to Filby, "In Wales and Scotland early November is the time for ghosts to be remembered.

Samhain is connected in legend with Avalon, the Kingdom of the Dead, to which Arthur was taken across the waters of a lake." As late as 1818, George Faber cited Edward Davies' Mythology of the British Druids saying, 'Bardic songs are yet extant in which is celebrated the return of the mythological Arthur with his seven companions from their voyage over a boundless ocean, beneath the waves of which all the rest of mankind had been overwhelmed.'"[18]

Whether in the northern hemisphere where preparations for winter are made or in the southern hemisphere where summer approaches, civilizations throughout time and across the globe have associated the end of October and the beginning of November with the deceased—often naming the season after a god or goddess of the dead. Of course, we cannot be certain that this harkens back to Noah's flood, but such a universal memory is among the most plausible explanations for this global phenomenon. As such, Halloween's true origins may far predate the Christian All Saint's Day and even the pagan, Celtic festival of Samhain.

This should give Christians special pause. It was mankind's affinity for wickedness that provoked God to judge the world with a flood. On the anniversary of such a great judgment, at Halloween, have we unwittingly found ourselves celebrating the very evil that provoked God to judge the ancient world? Moreover, have we sought to resurrect, if only in memory, the very monsters destroyed in God's judgment? Is this truly something any Christian should desire to celebrate?

There is nothing wrong with remembering a season when nearly all of humanity was swept away because of its wickedness, but something is dreadfully wrong if we choose to celebrate any aspect of it. Of course, few people today have in mind the flood account when they think of Halloween. Perhaps fewer recall the Nephilim when

watching horror movies. So is it appropriate to allow this darker heritage to justify altogether rejecting Halloween?

To answer this question, it is worth recalling a common mistake known as the genetic fallacy. It occurs when one evaluates a belief according to its origin and history rather than according to its relevant evidence.[19] Just because a practice had a particular meaning millennia ago does not necessitate it have the same meaning today.

An illustration of this reasoning can be found in the jack-o'-lantern. The tradition of carving faces into hollowed-out, illuminated pumpkins (originally turnips) may have begun as an effort to symbolize the severed heads of one's enemies among the early Celts.[20] It is also commonly believed that such creations were used to ward-off restless spirits of the dead during Samhain when they were thought to mingle among the living. Still others trace its origin to an 18th-century Irish folktale about Stingy Jack designed to explain *ignis fatuus,* a natural phenomenon that produces flickering lights in marshlands and bogs as gases from decomposing organic matter combust. Blane Bachelor writes in *National Geographic*:

> Dozens of versions abound, but one recurring storyline is that Stingy Jack tricked the devil twice. When Jack died, he found himself barred from heaven—and from hell. But the devil took some pity on Jack, giving him an ember of coal to light his turnip lantern as he wandered between both places for eternity—again inspiring the nickname Jack-of-the-Lantern, or jack-o'-lantern.[21]

Despite its origin, very few people today associate the jack-o'-lantern with anything more than a popular children's holiday craft. Far from serving as a wandering trickster's lantern or a protective ward against evil spirits, it now serves

merely as a festive decoration. Today's meaning of the jack-o'-lantern bears virtually no association with its origin story and ancient tradition. We don't even use the same vegetable as the American pumpkin has replaced the Irish turnip. Consequently, it is intellectually dishonest to assign moral value to the modern use of the jack-o'-lantern based upon its origins. Christians who decorate their homes with jack-o'-lanterns are not adopting "the way of the heathen"—as warned against in Jeremiah 10:2—anymore than they seek to venerate ancient gods by using the titles given to our days of the week, which were originally dedications of the days to specific gods and goddesses.[22, 23] Indeed, our culture is rife with common practices whose origins are rooted in ancient, pagan traditions that very few people understand today.

Just because aspects of Halloween, its monsters, and its traditions have questionable origins and a sordid history does not necessitate that everything about the holiday is evil. We must evaluate each aspect according to what it means for us and our society *today*. Clearly there are enough problematic elements in both Halloween's historic and modern celebrations to prevent Christians from entirely receiving Halloween and all it has to offer. However, now that we understand the way Halloween has evolved into its modern incarnation, we are still left with the question of whether it remains a holiday to be rejected or redeemed.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. What is the most likely explanation for why so many diverse cultures, dating back to time immemorial, have a shared belief in the same, otherworldly creatures?

II. How might these otherworldly monsters be related to a race of giants called the Nephilim in both the Bible and Jewish literature?

III. Why did the Jews associate the Nephilim with demons?

IV. Civilizations throughout time and across the globe have associated the end of October and the beginning of November with the deceased—often naming the season after a god or goddess of the dead. What is one of the most plausible explanations of this phenomenon?

V. Is it appropriate for Christians to participate in Halloween if its origin is a commemoration of Noah's flood when God judged mankind's affinity for wickedness? Why?

A. Should it make a difference knowing that this is not what most people have in mind when they celebrate Halloween? Why?

VI. Just because aspects of Halloween, its monsters, and its traditions have questionable origins and a sordid history does not necessitate that everything about the holiday is evil. Why?

A. Why should we evaluate each aspect of Halloween according to what it means for us and our society *today*?

VII. What is the genetic fallacy, and what is its importance to the question of whether Christians should participate in a holiday that may be rooted in Noah's flood?

VIII. Having reviewed the history of Halloween, has your thinking changed regarding whether Christians should reject Halloween or endeavor to redeem it? Why?

Part 2

What Should We Do?

Can Halloween Be Redeemed? Should It Be Redeemed? What Does It Mean to Redeem a Holiday?

9. Redeeming Monsters

The complex and varied history of Halloween, along with its accompanying characters and traditions, make it difficult to know what to do with the holiday. Simply dismissing Halloween as a pagan practice involving Druids, ghosts, and goblins fails to recognize its communal essence. Throughout history Halloween has served an important role for individuals and the community alike as they prepare for difficult times, confront their fears, and accept the reality of death and evil. If given proper context, might it then also serve as a vehicle for providing God's answers to the problems of death and evil?

Far from serving as "Satan's day," Halloween belongs to God. Psalm 118:24 declares, *"This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."* It is foolish to believe God has willingly ceded an entire day to His enemy, expecting His people to helplessly watch from their protective bunkers as evil is permitted to run rampant one night each year. There is no aspect of culture or society where the gospel cannot be applied. This includes Halloween. Therefore, faithful Christians are certainly permitted to use Halloween as an opportunity to share God's truth with the world.

Biblical exhortations against learning the way of the heathen and their religious customs do not preclude Christians from applying the gospel to the traditions of their culture (Jer. 10:2, KJV). There is a marked difference between embracing a tradition and confronting that same tradition. Similarly, the Apostle Paul's command to have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness does not prohibit Christians from using cultural traditions to reach the lost. Instead, he proceeds to encourage God's people to take advantage of every opportunity to glorify God:

> *Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,*
>
> *'Awake, O sleeper,*
> *rise up from the dead,*
> *and Christ will give you light.'*
>
> *So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do* (Eph. 5:11–17).

In our modern culture Halloween certainly provides Christians with opportunities to share God with the world. It is not often that we can freely share our anxiety about death and evil with other people—especially strangers and those we don't know well—without it being awkward or taboo. Likewise, it is not often that we can discuss the supernatural realm without sounding irrational.

What better time is there for conversations about the afterlife than a day dominated by ghosts and undead monsters? Indeed, the horror of these monsters themselves provide prime opportunities to share spiritual truths with a secular society. Far from fearing these monsters, Christians can embrace them as meaningful archetypes that illustrate Christian themes.

Indeed, there is a long Christian tradition of using monsters who personify evil to communicate spiritual ideas. Throughout the Bible, God Himself capitalizes upon the pagan imagination to illustrate truth. The primordial chaos monster Leviathan, the vampiric Lilith, the demonic satyr, and hellish scorpion men are some of the familiar villains in ancient mythology employed by God as metaphors. These ranked among the greatest horrors in the ancient imagination. Why then would we assume contemporary horror monsters are somehow too evil to be redeemed by using them as metaphors to communicate Christian truths?

Sometimes horror can help people confront their evil. Of course, we must broaden our understanding of horror beyond the gratuitous and immoral exaltation of sex, violence, and death for the sake of evoking fear, which seems to define the category today. As a genre, horror plays upon our innate fears and aversions to communicate fundamental truths about human nature, good versus evil, and even the spiritual realm. Perhaps, then, it should not be surprising to discover that God frequently employs elements of the horror genre in Scripture. Screenwriter and author Brian Godawa explains:

> God uses horrific explicit images in order to put up a mirror to cultures of social injustice and spiritual defilement. God used gang rape of a harlot and dismemberment of her body as a metaphor of Israel's spiritual apostasy (Ezek. 16, 23), and the resurrection of

> skeletal remains as a symbol for the restoration of his people within the covenant (Ezek. 37). Our holy, loving, kind, and good God also used the following horror images to visually depict cultural decay and social injustice: skinning bodies and cannibalism (Mic. 3:1–3); Frankenstein replacement of necrotic body parts (Ezek. 11:19); cannibalism (Ezek. 36:13–14; Ps. 27:2; Prov. 30:14; Jer. 19:9; Zech. 11:9); vampirism (2 Sam. 23:17; Rev. 16:6); cannibals and vampires together (Ezek. 39:18–19); rotting flesh (Lam. 3:4; 4:8; Ps. 31:9–10; 38:2–8; Ezek. 24:3, 33:10; Zech. 14:12); buckets of blood across the land (Ezek. 9:9, 22:2–4); man-eating beasts devouring people and flesh (Ezek. 19:1-8; 22:25, 27; 29:3; Dan. 7:5; Jer. 50:17); crushing and trampling bodies and grinding faces (Amos 4:1; 8:4; Isa. 3:15); and bloody murdering hands (Isa. 1:15, 59:3; Mic. 7:2–3). Horror is a strongly biblical medium for God's social commentary.[1]

Gothic horror, from which was birthed our modern depictions of monsters, is rooted in mankind's fear and comprehension of its own dark inclinations. Indeed, vampires portray the thirst and restlessness of our repressed dark side. They challenge us to confront our natural predisposition for evil and our pursuit of personal gratification over all else. Zombies epitomize the animalistic nature that remains when the societal restraints of sin disintegrate. They reveal our willingness to prioritize survival over sacrifice, thus exposing the futility of life apart from the relationships that ground our humanity. And Frankenstein's monster is the consequence of stripping away the sacred nature of mankind, reducing ourselves to mere biology. Moreover, Frankenstein highlights our lust for power and control, believing that through science we can become our own gods—our own authors of life and death.

The horror of these monsters illustrates how repulsive our own innate desires and tendencies truly are. Examined from the proper perspective, monsters teach us much about our sinful natures, about evil, and about God's solution to these problems.

Vampires

Integral to every vampire story is blood. Utilizing blood as a source of empowerment is a practice that dates back millennia. Ancient religions and their practices of witchcraft emphasized blood, frequently employing it in their ceremonies and rituals. It was believed that anyone who drunk the blood of an animal, or a human, could become endowed with the victim's energy and strength.

This is why God commanded His people to separate themselves from such practices: *"'Do not eat meat that has not been drained of its blood. Do not practice fortune-telling or witchcraft'"* (Lev. 19:26). God's command against eating blood was directly associated with witchcraft, and the ensuing context is focused upon ancient customs associated with witchcraft and pagan religious worship (Lev. 19:27–31). It appears God did not issue this command because of dietary or health concerns; instead, God sought to prevent His people from seeking empowerment from a source other than Himself.

Moreover, they did not need increased power; they needed forgiveness, but God knew that forgiveness would come only at the expense of a life. This was symbolized using the life of animals until Jesus Christ eventually secured that forgiveness with His own life. Only Jesus' blood can permanently pay the guilt debt of sin and provide fullness of life (John 10:9–11). According to the Bible:

> *God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. … And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation … resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom. 3:25; 5:9, 21).

Likewise, just before His death, Jesus told His disciples, *"This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many"* (Matt. 26:28).

Vampires profane blood, but to God blood is sacred:

> *If any native Israelite or foreigner living among you eats or drinks blood in any form, I will turn against that person and cut him off from the community of your people, for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the LORD. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible. That is why I have said to the people of Israel, "You must never eat or drink blood—neither you nor the foreigners living among you"* (Lev. 17:10–12).

Empowerment and the pursuit of life are the primary reasons why vampires drink blood. According to legend, when a vampire ingests blood, it captures the victim's life-force. This not only nourishes the vampire but also endows it with supernatural abilities, such as strength, health, and immortality. Thus, vampires embody the pagan traditions God forbid among His people. Vampire lore wrongly suggests that man can attain immortality and god-like empowerment apart from Jesus Christ. However, the Bible teaches that it is only through aligning oneself with Jesus

and identifying with His blood sacrifice that a person can attain eternal life (John 3:16; 8:24; 14:6). Notably, this life also results in supernatural empowerment (John 14:16–17; Php. 4:13).

Vampires offer natural opportunities for Christians to have meaningful conversations highlighting the futility of seeking immortality, empowerment, or a satisfied life anywhere but Jesus. Vampires emphasize the wrong blood, as human blood cannot provide eternal life or a sense of fulfillment and purpose—something evidenced by the vampire's continuous state of melancholy, insatiable hunger, and dissatisfaction as it hides in the shadows and periphery of society. In contrast Jesus offers His followers a "rich and satisfying life" (John 10:10). There simply are no substitutes. This life is only attainable through Jesus who serves as *"the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6).

Nearly everything that defines the vampire is something from which we have been called to separate ourselves. In many ways, vampires are the embodiment of our sinful natures. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissentions, divisions, envy, and orgies are all qualities shared by both vampires and our sinful nature (Gal. 5:19–21). Vampires reflect our natural inclinations as humans, and their stories portray how destructive these inclinations can be if not controlled and ultimately redeemed.

Indeed, vampires are the epitome of rebellion against God's instruction to abstain from drinking blood, engaging in sexual immorality, coveting, and all impurity. As such, the debauched and restless life of the vampire serves as an ideal contrast to the pure and satisfied life offered in Jesus Christ. Perhaps there is no better way to redeem the vampire than to embrace it as a metaphor illustrating our need for a savior.

Werewolves

Werewolves confuse God's created design. They blur the boundary lines between species, yet the Bible emphasizes that God created species distinct from one another (Gen. 1:21, 24–25). Werewolves contradict the Bible's teaching that humans are created distinct from the animals, having been designed in the image of God:

> *Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.*
>
> *So God created human beings in his own image.*
> *In the image of God he created them;*
> *male and female he created them* (Gen. 1:26–27).

God created humans to rule over the animal kingdom, yet the werewolf subjects mankind to the same base instincts that govern animals. Indeed, the werewolf is the supreme example of losing one's self-control and giving way to one's carnal nature. Here again, the werewolf is a fitting metaphor. It portrays our tendency to succumb to our destructive sinful natures when tempted. Apart from God, mankind is irresistibly drawn to sin in the same way that the werewolf's bloodlust is drawn to the full moon.

In our own strength, we are slaves to our passions, but Jesus offers us freedom. No longer need we fear being enslaved by our desires if we will align ourselves with God's design and will for humanity (Gal. 5:24–25). Indeed, God grants every Christian a spirit of self-control, enabled by His Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22–24; 2 Tim. 1:7). As such, we are supernaturally empowered to resist any temptation: *"The*

temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptations to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Witches

In modern times, the witch has increasingly become a sympathetic character. Nonetheless, God stands against all witches, whether they be agreeable, like Hermoine Granger, or sinister, like the Wicked Witch of the West. Good witches battling bad witches are a figment of our imagination. In God's eyes there is no such thing as white magic versus black magic, nor is magic deemed morally neutral. According to God, all who practice witchcraft are detestable to the Lord: *"Do not let your people practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD"* (Deut. 18:10–12).

At the heart of witchcraft is a spirit of rebellion, something indicated in 1 Samuel 15:23. The manner and methods may vary, but witchcraft is fundamentally the manipulation of spiritual forces to accomplish one's own will. Witchcraft places personal desire and ambition above the ways of God, and it seeks to accomplish these goals in one's own timing and apart from God.

Witchcraft promises us the lusts of our heart without requiring that we submit to God. Unfortunately, our hearts are desperately wicked: *"This is what the LORD says: 'Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength … The human heart is the most deceitful of*

all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" (Jer. 17:5, 9).

Rather than force our will by any means necessary, the Bible instructs us to rely upon God who has our best interests in mind, and who will work to ensure our good. Romans 8:28 reminds us, *"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose."* After all, 1 Corinthians 2:9 promises, *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."* But this requires trust in the sovereignty and wisdom of God: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding"* (Prov. 3:5).

Zombies

God has promised His people eternal life (John 3:16). The day is coming when the dead in Christ will be raised to life everlasting (Rom. 6:4–5; 1 Thess. 4:16–18). Not only will we live, we will also share in God's glory (Dan. 12:2–3; Rom. 8:17). Some will even rule with Jesus in His kingdom (Rev. 20:4). This is a far cry from the zombie resurrection.

Zombies are a perversion of God's promise to resurrect our bodies: *"Just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life"* (1 Cor. 15:21–22). Far from the resurrection described above, zombies are raised as mindless, rotting, corpses. However, the Bible teaches that we will be resurrected in the same manner as Jesus: *"Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was"* (Rom. 6:4–5). In neither His

mortal nor immortal body, was Jesus ever portrayed as a mindless, rotting, corpse (Luke 24:15–49; John 20:14–18).

Moreover, zombies are the antithesis of the Christian ethic. They seek only to steal, kill, and destroy in pursuit of simply surviving. Freed from all societal restraints, zombies are pure carnage, driven by the need to survive at any expense. This is the converse of what Jesus offers: *"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them rich and satisfying life"* (John 10:10).

Unlike the selfish motivation of the zombie, the satisfied life Jesus offers is rooted in a sacrificial love:

> *I [Jesus] have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends* (John 15:9–13).

The zombie is the epitome of an individual devoid of all love for his fellowman. In a sense, zombies are the ultimate fulfillment of Galatians 5:14–15: *"The whole law can be summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another."* Zombies provide a visible representation of how destructive a self-centered and divisive lack of love for others can be.

Ghosts

Ghosts encourage conversations about the finality of death. Many ghosts are thought to be the spirits of dead humans with unfinished business, but this refutes the teaching of the Bible: *"When they [people] breathe their last, they return to the earth [are buried], and all their plans die with them"* (Psa. 146:4). All that a person cares about and aspires to become in this life ceases upon the individual's death. As such, it should be evident that the spirit of a deceased individual has no reason to haunt a house, a location, or an item. In fact, the departed spirit is incapable of haunting anything: *"Just as a cloud dissipates and vanishes, those who die will not come back. They are gone forever from their home—never to be seen again"* (Job 7:9–10).

Whatever may be lingering around something thought to be haunted is certainly not the soul of a dead human. Interestingly enough, when Jesus' disciples believed Him to be a ghost, after His resurrection, Jesus did not deny the existence of ghosts:

> *Just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do"* (Luke 24:36–39).

The Bible does not refute the existence of apparitions; it denies the idea that ghosts are the spirits of dead humans who haunt locations and items. Instead, Scripture indicates that there are other spirits who pretend to be the spirits of

dead people. These are called "familiar spirits," but God forbids communicating with them (Lev. 19:31; 20:27; Isa. 8:19–20, KJV).

Humans do not get a second chance after death. Unfinished business will remain unfinished business: *"[The dead] have no further reward, nor are they remembered. Whatever they did in their lifetime—loving, hating, envying—is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth"* (Ecc. 9:5–6). Any belongings of the dead will be forever left behind: *"We brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it"* (1 Tim. 6:7). All that remains is judgment for the decisions made in life: *"Each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment"* (Heb. 9:27).

Monsters afford ample opportunity for meaningful conversations about our sinful nature, about evil, and about God's solution to these problems. But there is a difference between appreciating the value of monsters as archetypes illustrating Christian themes and celebrating these abominations. If monsters personify the mindset, pursuits, lifestyle, and despair from which we have been freed, why would we champion them? These are things to be despised, not celebrated: *"Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good"* (Rom. 12:9).

It is an oddity of history that our contemporary culture has become sympathetic toward these villains. Monsters are loathsome beings intended to be the very incarnation of evil. As such, Christians, whose hearts are aligned with God, cannot be attracted to them: *"O God, you take no pleasure in wickedness; you cannot tolerate the sins of the wicked. … you hate all who do evil. You will destroy those who tell lies. The LORD detests murderers and deceivers"* (Psa. 5:4–6).

Nonetheless, the solution may not be to entirely reject these monsters. The Bible teaches, *"Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them"* (Eph. 5:11). Rather than ignore Halloween's ensemble of horrors, faithful Christians are challenged to expose them—to reveal to those around us the spiritual truths that monsters embody.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. Does Halloween belong to Satan? Why?

II. Are Christians permitted to use Halloween as an opportunity to share God's truth with the world? Why?

   A. If so, does this necessitate that Christians celebrate Halloween? Why?

   B. Do the exhortation in Jeremiah 10:2 against learning the way of the heathen and their religious customs preclude Christians from applying the gospel to the traditions of their culture? Why?

   C. Does the Apostle Paul's command in Ephesians 5:11–17 to have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness prohibit Christians from using cultural traditions to reach the lost (Eph. 5:11–17)? Why?

III. What is the difference between embracing a tradition and confronting that same tradition?

IV. How does Halloween afford unique opportunities to talk about things that are usually discouraged in our culture?

V. How can horror help people confront their evil?

    A. Does God use horror to communicate truth? Why?

VI. How might vampires help Christians have meaningful conversations highlighting the futility of seeking immortality, empowerment, or a satisfied life anywhere but Jesus?

    A. How are vampires the embodiment of our sinful natures?

VII. How do werewolves confuse God's created design?

VIII. How might werewolves help us to communicate God's truth that, in our own strength, we are slaves to our passions, but Jesus offers us freedom?

IX. Does God differentiate between good witches and bad witches or white magic versus black magic? Explain.

    A. Is magic morally neutral? Why?

X. What attitude is at the heart of witchcraft?

A. Witchcraft promises us the lusts of our heart without requiring that we submit to God, but what does the Bible say about our heart?

XI. How are zombies a perversion of God's promise to resurrect our bodies?

XII. How might zombies help us to communicate God's truth regarding how destructive a self-centered and divisive lack of love for others can be?

A. How are zombies the antithesis of the Christian ethic?

XIII. How might ghosts encourage conversations about the finality of death?

A. What does the Bible say about dead humans with unfinished business?

B. What does the Bible say about dead humans returning to haunt the living?

C. What does the Bible say about humans getting a second chance after death?

XIV. Should Christians champion monsters if they personify the mindset, pursuits, lifestyle, and despair from which we have been freed?

A. Rather than entirely reject monsters, what does the Bible encourage us to do?

10. Judging the Matter

"It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret," writes the Apostle Paul (Eph. 5:12). How great then must our country's shame be for dedicating a holiday season to celebrate the deeds usually confined to the secrecy of darkness? While many may desire to focus entirely on community and childlike fun at Halloween, not all that transpires on this unique night is innocent. Indeed, evil is tolerated, and even celebrated, at Halloween. This is particularly troubling because nations that promote evil provoke God to judgment.

Halloween has generated an environment where small crimes are commonplace and acceptable behavior. Defacing churches, knocking over tombstones, and the stealing of small pets for Occult rituals are regular occurrences on October 31. According to the New York-based insurance company Travelers, Halloween brings 17% more crime-related home insurance claims than any other day of the year.[1] And then there is the destructive history of October 30, variously called Mischief Night, Devils' Night, or Hell Night.

Particularly problematic in the 1970s and 1980s, Devils' Night attracts destructive vandals. Nowhere has this been a greater issue than in Detroit, Michigan. "For decades in

Detroit, Halloween Eve was synonymous with fire," recalls the *Detroit Metro Times*. "Between 1979 and 2010, more than 100 fires broke out each year. The worst year was 1984, when firefighters responded to more than 800 blazes that covered the entire city in an eerie, smoky haze on Halloween morning."[2] Following another spike of arsons in 1994, Detroit launched its Angels' Night initiative until 2017, which involved tens of thousands of volunteers patrolling neighborhoods between October 29 and 31.[3]

Even our law-abiding holiday entertainment promotes evil. Horror movies, slashers, and haunted houses that cheapen the value of human life are a staple of our American Halloween celebrations. These are accompanied by ghoulish décor so realistic and commonplace that they have allowed real murders and suicides to go unnoticed. The corpse of a 42-year-old woman who committed suicide-by-hanging was left suspended in public view for hours along a moderately busy road in Frederica, Delaware. State Police Spokesman Jeff Oldham and neighbors said the scene was dismissed as a holiday prank.[4] Similarly, the body of a decomposing, 75-year-old, suicide victim shot through the eye remained slumped over patio furniture on his balcony for five days in Marina del Rey, California because neighbors believed him to be a Halloween decoration.[5] Then there is the story out of Long Island, New York of a man with a history of psychiatric problems decapitating his mother and dragging her body into the street. Because the body and severed head were near a home decorated with Halloween pumpkins, fake cobwebs, and a mock graveyard, neighbors assumed it to be nothing more than holiday décor.[6]

The mere fact that the bodies of real suicide and murder victims are indistinguishable from our common holiday ornamentation should trouble us. Why are we celebrating death, and why must these celebrations be so realistic? But death is not the only evil graphically celebrated at

Halloween. Debauchery of all kinds are celebrated. Recall the *San Jose Mercury News* report of an LGBTQ Halloween celebration in California: "It simply got too big for its britches—although not all partygoers have bothered to wear them. Part of the event's appeal has been its disdain for good taste and conventional modesty: The only dress code has been that imposed by the chilly night air."[7] Such LGBTQ parades regularly flaunt sexual liberation during what lesbian poet and scholar Judy Grahn has called the "great gay holiday."[8]

As a holiday of inversion, none of this is unusual. At Halloween, taboos of all sorts are removed. Even Occult practices are accepted by our society on this unique night. Whether it be witches gathering on social media to cast a hex upon their political opponents,[9] celebrations of mother earth, or the worship of Satan, Occult rituals are commonplace at Halloween. Not surprisingly, Halloween produces an annual spike in interest among Occult groups like Wicca, but even apart from formal rituals, Halloween entices the curious to consult Ouija Boards, to contact the dead, and to divine the future.[10]

If ever there was a night when Americans provoke God, it is Halloween. For a large portion of our population, today's Halloween revelries are not an expression of righteousness; they are an expression of darkness. Left unchecked, this darkness will guide our nation ever further down a path of destruction because God inevitably judges nations for promoting and celebrating evil. The Assyrian capital of Ninevah was judged for its murders, its sexual immorality, its Occult practices, and its role in encouraging other nations to practice these things (Nah. 3:1, 4, 19). The Canaanites were cast from their land for embracing all forms of sexual immorality, including homosexuality (Lev. 18). God's favored nation was sent into exile because of Judah's spiritual complacency, its revelries, and its pursuit of

comfort while refusing to grieve over its spiritual waywardness. And Isaiah 24:1–6 prophesies a coming judgment upon nations who pollute the world through their promotion of evil.

Notably, every one of these sins are regularly excused—and even championed—in America's contemporary Halloween celebrations. This, combined with the holiday's complex history, has caused Christians to divide into three schools of thought regarding how best to handle the holiday's festivities:

- **Receive:** God likes to have fun, and He enjoys it when His people celebrate. In the Old Testament, God ordained festivals and parties because He is a God of celebration. As long as our motives are good, there is nothing wrong with enjoying Halloween.

- **Reject:** Some aspects of culture are inherently sinful and should be avoided. Halloween is a pagan festival devoted to celebrating spiritual darkness and death. As such, separating from Halloween not only protects Christians from the influence of enemy spirits, but it also testifies to God's disdain for such evil practices.

- **Redeem:** Many aspects of Halloween are distortions of God's truth. If properly exposed, these truths can be reclaimed for God's purposes.

Fully embracing and celebrating a holiday associated with so much darkness is not acceptable Christian behavior. Thus, receiving all that Halloween offers is not an option for Christians; however, many who identify with the camp of receiving Halloween do not embrace every aspect of the holiday. Perhaps a case can be made that there is nothing

immoral about Christians receiving Halloween as long as our motivations are good, but such an option fails to consider the consequences of refusing to resist an expanding Halloween culture that is rooted in the celebration and promotion of evil. To judge Halloween strictly according to our personal motivations is to blind ourselves to the reality of Halloween in American culture.

By refusing to collectively purge our Halloween revelries of darkness and evil, our nation is on a trajectory that inevitably leads to judgment. If we embrace Halloween while doing nothing to challenge the promotion of evil, we are complicit in engendering God's judgment. Whatever decision we make regarding Halloween, it ought to elicit some degree of conviction among those who celebrate the carnal and darker aspects of the holiday. Thus, we are come to a crisis of decision between our only remaining options. As Christians should we seek to redeem Halloween or reject it?

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. The statement was made, "Evil is tolerated, and even celebrated, at Halloween." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

   A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

II. The statement was made, "Halloween has generated an environment where small crimes are commonplace and acceptable behavior." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

   A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

III. The statement was made, "Horror movies, slashers, and haunted houses that cheapen the value of human life are a staple of our American Halloween celebrations." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

   A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

IV. Why do you think our Halloween décor has become so lifelike and graphic?

A. What do you think it says about our society when we struggle to differentiate between real dead bodies and our holiday decorations?

V. The statement was made, "Halloween produces an annual spike in interest among Occult groups like Wicca, but even apart from formal rituals, Halloween entices the curious to consult Ouija Boards, to contact the dead, and to divine the future." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

VI. The statement was made, "If ever there was a night when Americans provoke God, it is Halloween." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

VII. The statement was made, "Fully embracing and celebrating a holiday associated with so much darkness is not acceptable Christian behavior." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

VIII. The statement was made, "To judge Halloween strictly according to our personal motivations is to blind ourselves to the reality of Halloween in

American culture." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

IX. Does understanding that God judges nations for the sins we habitually celebrate and flaunt at Halloween change the way you think about Halloween? Explain.

X. The statement was made, "By refusing to collectively purge our Halloween revelries of darkness and evil, our nation is on a trajectory that inevitably leads to judgment. If we embrace Halloween while doing nothing to challenge the promotion of evil, we are complicit in engendering God's judgment." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

11. Should Halloween Be Redeemed?

If Halloween's cast of monsters can be redeemed, what about other aspects of the holiday? Should Christians endeavor to redeem Halloween's remaining traditions and activities? Perhaps a little intentionality, combined with the transforming power of Jesus Christ, could bring value to what may otherwise be empty traditions:

> *Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ... Through him you believe in*

> *God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.* (1 Peter 1:18–19, 21, NIV).

Is the Apostle Peter calling Christians to be set apart in holiness, being willing to take the mindset of a foreigner who neither understands this world's culture, nor is fully accepted by society? Or is he calling Christians to bring a soberness and a righteousness to otherwise empty and futile aspects of culture, such as Halloween? In short, is Peter calling Christians to reject Halloween or to sanctify it?

If this passage is, among other things, a call to redeem Halloween by sanctifying it, then the appeal is not merely to sanitize it but to apply an entirely new meaning and purpose to the holiday. Peter reminds us that we were redeemed *from* our empty way of life when we changed *how* we think about the promises of the world, placing our faith and hope in God. Any appeal from Peter to redeem Halloween would include capturing the holiday from the culture and transforming it into a Christ-honoring celebration.

This is a far different strategy than is commonly meant by those who advocate redeeming Halloween. Common suggestions, such as restricting costume parties to Bible characters, taping Bible verses to candy bars for trick-or-treaters, or substituting the lyrics to "Monster Mash" are no more effective at redeeming Halloween than renaming celebrations "harvest parties" or "Fall festivals" are at rejecting the holiday. The fundamentals remain unchanged. Such practices merely produce alternative Halloween celebrations that rehash the world's version of Halloween in a manner more palatable for Christians.

Simply changing names, lyrics, and themes does not redeem anything. True sanctification produces obedience to God (1 Pet. 1:2). Purifying and redeeming Halloween should be about producing a culture that exalts and is obedient to Christ (Psa. 110:1).

In their book, *Redeeming Halloween*, Kim Wier and Pam McCune offer numerous suggestions for how to truly transform Halloween celebrations into activities that honor God. One example relates to pumpkin carving:

- Be like a Halloween pumpkin: a source of light on a dark night. As your family transforms a pumpkin into a decorative lantern, use the process to teach how we ourselves can be a better light source.
    - Cutting open the top: Have the mind of Christ to think and act as He would (1 Corinthians 2:16).
    - Cleaning out the seeds: Confess your sins so God can clean them out (1 John 1:9)
    - Carving new eyes: Instead of looking for the faults of others, use your eyes to examine your own faults first (Matthew 7:3–5).
    - Carving a nose: Don't be a proud person with your nose in the air or you will be the cause of many arguments (Proverbs 13:10).
    - Carving ears: Listen to gain knowledge and tune your ears to wisdom from others (Proverbs 23:12).
    - Carving a mouth: Let your words be sweet so that they will bless others (Proverbs 16:24).
    - Lighting the candle: When you try to think, act, see, listen, and speak as Christ, then "your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, [and] it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you." (Luke 11:36).
    - You can give this devotion to your family using a ready-made pumpkin that you prepare beforehand. Just replace all of the cutouts and remove them one by one at the

appropriate time in your presentation. You could even draw the face on with a permanent marker instead of cutting it out.

- Use the carving process to share the gospel.
    - Cut the pumpkin open and reveal the mess inside: No matter how our life looks on the outside, our life is really a mess and hopeless without God because of our sin (Romans 3:23).
    - Turn the pumpkin upside down and try to shake out the mess: We can't get rid of our own sin. Just as a pumpkin will rot and be left useless as it is, left with our sin, we will also face ruin (Romans 6:23).
    - The pumpkin is helpless to take its own mess away and needs our help: We are helpless to take our sin away and we need help too (Rom. 5:6, 8).
    - Remove the seeds and slime from the inside of the pumpkin: God sent Jesus to do what we couldn't, take away our sins (Romans 10:9).
    - Show the clean and empty pumpkin: Once the mess has been taken away, a new space has been created for something better (Ephesians 4:22–32).
    - Cut a joyful face in the pumpkin: Joy is one of the first things that God uses to fill that empty space (Romans 15:13).
    - Place a candle inside the pumpkin and light it: Now our lives are a place where God lives, and when we obey Him, the light of His goodness shines through us (John 8:12).

- Set the newly carved pumpkin next to an uncarved one: When we trust Jesus to take away our sins, He makes us into a whole new creature, full of joy and light (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Set your pumpkin out for all to see, but as you do, tell your children that the pumpkin will eventually rot and perish: Those with the real light of Christ, though will never perish, because we have eternal life (John 3:16).[1]

Note how this redemption practice entirely disassociates the jack-o-lantern from its heritage and lore. No mention is made of Stingy Jack, of severed enemy heads, or of warding-off restless spirits. In this illustration the jack-o-lantern is even divorced from its contemporary employment as a spooky decoration. Instead, the pumpkin face becomes nothing more than a face, and the face becomes an interactive prop for reviewing the principles of God, which ought to govern our bodies. Even better, the pumpkin becomes a tangible picture of God's transforming power in our lives. Far from simply carving "joyful pumpkins," the authors of *Redeeming Halloween* have developed a means of using the tradition of pumpkin carving to produce a culture of Christ. (Any who are interested in a resource brimming with practical ideas for transforming Halloween's celebrations into Christ-honoring events would do well to read *Redeeming Halloween.*)

The internet is replete with assurances that Halloween can be redeemed by simply being the most generous family on the block, including gospel tracts and Bible verses with our treats, and by using church parking lots for trunk-or-treat outreaches, but these things do not change the way people think about Halloween's activities and traditions. Without a change of mind, there is no redemption. God

redeems His people by changing the way we think: *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think"* (Rom. 12:2).

If redeeming Halloween requires changing the way we think about its celebrations, then about what do our traditions and activities currently encourage us to think? When we see the jack-o-lantern, do we think of spooky folklore—maybe a popular holiday decoration—or do we think of the transforming power of Jesus in our lives? When we see the vampire, do we think of blood and terror—maybe a movie—or do we think of how prone we are to chase after the wrong sources for life and empowerment? When we see costumed trick-or-treaters, do we see a reenactment of ancient customs—maybe just greedy children—or do we see the joy of imagination and the beauty of community? If we are to redeem Halloween, it must involve assigning new meaning to its traditions and activities.

Equally as important is the cause of our celebration. What exactly are we celebrating at Halloween? A necessary pre-requisite to sanctifying the holiday is to ensure that we are celebrating something truly worthwhile and God-honoring. Perhaps we might celebrate:

- **Relationships**: Holidays provide natural opportunities to invite people into our homes. Halloween is especially unique because entire neighborhoods may come to our houses uninvited to solicit treats. What a prime opportunity to make introductions, learn the names of our neighbors, and extend invitations to reconnect later. If we make trick or treat about building relationships rather than proselytizing, we can celebrate the opportunity to connect with our communities.

- **Difficulties:** Halloween reminds us that the world can be a challenging place to live. Uncertainties and evil abound, making life difficult. We can consider how our own difficulties have defined us. Moreover, we can celebrate the occasion to talk with others about evil, injustice, transformation, and death.

- **Change:** Some may fear change, but change is an unavoidable reality that provides new opportunities (Ecc. 3:1–8). It also reminds us that we are not condemned to wallow in our mistakes forever. Remembering how common change is to our existence can give us hope for ways that we ourselves may change. Halloween can be a time to review our mistakes and to seek God for guidance in what we can, and should, do differently.

- **The Supernatural:** Halloween's emphasis of the supernatural reminds us that there is far more to our existence than the natural world. Our hope is not constrained by the laws of nature. Instead, God has promised us an abundant life—even after the death of our mortal bodies. We can anticipate God's resurrection of the dead and celebrate our assurance of eternal life.

- **God's Kingdom:** We are confronted with the reality of the spiritual realm by nature of the supernatural atmosphere enveloping Halloween. Both the dominion of darkness and that of heaven's light exist within this spiritual realm. As Christians, we can celebrate our citizenship in the kingdom of heaven and long for the freedom of those still enslaved to darkness: *"[God] has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his*

dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins" (Col. 1:13–14).

- **The Reformation:** Tradition maintains that Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door on Halloween. His act of courage triggered the Reformation, restoring a belief in salvation through faith alone and in the sufficiency of Scripture as our only guide for life and faith. We can celebrate brave Christians like Martin Luther who are willing to take risks to stand on truth, helping God's people reform their faith and practice.

- **The Gospel:** Halloween can serve as the beginning of a societal reenactment of the gospel story, as told through the holiday season. Halloween initiates this season with a reminder of how dark and evil the world is. We need the light and hope of God—a Savior who can secure our lives, even after death. This Savior appears at Christmastime where the hope, light, and joy of Christmas stand in stark contrast to the despair, darkness, and fear of Halloween.

It is even acceptable to celebrate the dead at Halloween. Granted, God is the God of the living (Luke 20:38), but the early church recognized the value of remembering those who have died—particularly the testimonies of faithful Christians who are no longer with us. They considered it important to honor faithful men and women—both alive and dead: *"Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith"* (Heb. 13:7).

Remembering the testimonies of deceased saints and thanking God for their faithfulness is not the same as

worshipping the saints. Kim Wier and Pam McCune remind us, "Saints are treasures, not in who they are, but in the One they represent. It is the Maker alone who is worthy of our worship. He is our real treasure. His saints merely remind us He is the One worth living and dying for, and we honor them best when we focus on Christ."[2]

Halloween affords a natural opportunity to share memories of loved ones and stories of Christian faithfulness and courage—particularly with those who never had the opportunity to know them in life. Moreover, as we consider lives well lived, we might pray for today's Christians. We can pray that this generation of saints will rise to any challenge and glorify God through any difficulty. Specifically, we can pray for those saints who are experiencing persecution for their faith.

Conveniently, the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church is observed on the first Sunday in November. Perhaps Christians seeking to sanctify Halloween may think of the holiday as a season, in much the same way as Christmas, just as Hallowtide was once celebrated. On Halloween we may recall and celebrate the lives of deceased family members and friends. The following day, we might honor the saints by recalling the testimonies of God's people who remained faithful in the face of difficulty and persecution—even unto death. We can be inspired and encouraged by their stories. Then, on the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, we might pray for living saints who need courage and perseverance. We might even consider encouraging Christians whom we know are experiencing difficulties, missionaries, or pastors with a care package (Heb. 13:3).

Such reflection, celebration, prayer, and Christian hospitality may be a meaningful way for Christians to redeem Halloween by sanctifying it—bringing a soberness and righteousness that glorifies God to an otherwise empty

way of life (1 Peter 1:18–21). However, there is equal merit in considering the instruction of Peter as an exhortation to reject Halloween—to be set apart in holiness, being willing to take the mindset of a foreigner who neither understands this world's culture, nor is fully accepted by society for our decisions. Often these approaches of sanctifying and rejecting are pitted against each other as if they are entirely at odds with one another, but in truth each adheres to the same principle: *In all things Christians should celebrate what they can and seek to avoid or correct what remains*. The difference between these camps is simply a matter of degrees regarding which elements can be celebrated and how much of the holiday should be avoided versus corrected.

Even a rejection of Halloween can be redemptive when we adopt a mindset of being set apart from the world and its pursuits as we seek the righteousness of God. Recall that the key to redeeming Halloween is not in how to change the way we relate to and celebrate the holiday but in how to change the way the holiday makes us think. The carnality of revelers, the atmosphere of fear, and the celebration of evil may repulse us, provoking a longing for righteousness and a desire to seek refuge in the Lord.

Far from eliciting celebration, Halloween may move our spirits to grieve and mourn the depravity of our culture, much like Lot in Sodom: *"God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day"* (2 Peter 2:7–8). Furthermore, like Daniel, we may be driven to stand apart from the culture as we intercede on behalf of our nation:

> *So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and fasting. … I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed*

> … *"we have sinned and done wrong. We have rebelled against you and scorned your commands and regulations. … We make this plea, not because we deserve help, but because of your mercy. O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive"* (Dan. 9:3–5, 18–19).

When we as a nation showcase and celebrate evil, we risk invoking God's judgment. At the very least we forfeit God's blessing: *"If I [God] announce that I will plant and build up a certain nation or kingdom, but then that nation turns to evil and refuses to obey me, I will not bless it as I said I would"* (Jer. 18:9–10). Therefore, while many in America celebrate the carnal and darker aspects of Halloween, God's people may be stirred to intercede for mercy, asking for more time and opportunity to influence our culture with God's truth. Afterall, God promises, *"If I announce that a certain nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down, and destroyed, but then that nation renounces its evil ways, I will not destroy it as I had planned"* (Jer. 18:7–8). Likewise, 2 Chronicles 7:14 reminds us that God is willing to forgive nations that can humble themselves enough to turn away from their evil and seek Him.

This mindset stands in stark contrast to our culture, but it may be by contrasting the behavior and mentality of those around us that we encourage conviction. Moreover, rejecting the revelries of Halloween and its obsession with darkness may be the way we choose to show the world how God *"has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son"* (Col. 1:13). At the very least, rejecting Halloween may be the way we choose to apply the Bible's exhortations to resist temptation and to live in the world without embracing its values and mindset (1 Cor. 10:13; John 17:14–20; 1 John 2:15).

However, there is a difference between ignoring Halloween and rejecting it. Christians who simply turn a

blind eye to the season's décor and television programing while hiding in their darkened homes from trick-or-treaters merely survive Halloween. They may successfully separate themselves from the holiday, but nothing about this approach is redemptive.

By choosing to actively reject Halloween, Christians may function as counter-cultural change agents. In rejecting Halloween we draw attention, perhaps securing the opportunity to remind others that there is a line of demarcation dividing right from wrong, moral from immoral, and good from evil. In so doing we may create opportunity to change the way people think about Halloween, and who is to say whether this is any less effective at redeeming the holiday than the efforts of those who seek to sanctify Halloween?

Whether we choose to sanctify Halloween or reject it, Halloween must be redeemed—not because it is such a valuable holiday, but because of what it means for the future of our country. While not everything about this holiday is evil, America's current cultural expressions of Halloween are actively provoking God to judge our nation. America is on a perilous trajectory, and it will require the intentional effort of God's people if we are to change course. Simply ignoring Halloween is not a viable option.

The activities and traditions of Halloween are not going away. Whether they prompt us to seek God's mercy for our nation and to practice standing apart from evil in righteousness, or whether they engender a celebration of God's truths and remind us to pray for faithful Christians, there is certainly ample opportunity for us to redeem Halloween. Regardless of which path we choose, redeeming Halloween by changing the way we think begins with ourselves, not our neighbors. Only then will we be qualified to influence how others think.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. Do you think the Apostle Peter is calling Christians in 1 Peter 1:18–21 to sanctify Halloween or to reject it? Why?

II. What does it mean to redeem something?

    A. According to Romans 12:2, how does God redeem His people?

III. What is the difference between redeeming a holiday and sanitizing that holiday?

    A. Are such Christian tactics as restricting costume parties to Bible characters, taping Bible verses to candy bars for trick-or-treaters, being overly generous, or substituting the lyrics to "Monster Mash" likely to ever succeed at redeeming Halloween? Why?

IV. What does true sanctification produce?

V. About what do our most popular Halloween traditions and activities encourage you think?

A. If you celebrate Halloween, what are you celebrating?

VI. What do you think about the possibility of using Halloween to celebrate relationships, difficulties, change, the supernatural, God's kingdom, the Reformation, the gospel, or the dead? Explain.

VII. The statement was made, "In all things Christians should celebrate what they can and seek to avoid or correct what remains." Do you think there are things that are appropriate for some Christians to celebrate while being inappropriate for others? Explain.

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

B. Is your tendency to avoid sin or to correct it? Do you think this might produce a different response to certain aspects of Halloween than other Christians who genuinely desire to honor God?

VIII. In what ways might we seek to redeem Halloween by rejecting the holiday?

A. How is ignoring Halloween different from rejecting it?

IX. The statement was made, "America is on a perilous trajectory, and it will require the intentional effort of God's people if we are to change course. Simply

ignoring Halloween is not a viable option." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

B. According to Jeremiah 18:7–8, is there a point where we should lose hope that our nation may repent of its sins and stave-off God's judgment?

X. Where must any meaningful effort to redeem Halloween begin?

12. The Limitations of Christian Subversion

Grand aspirations to redeem Halloween are not new. The Roman Catholic Church has endeavored to change the way people think about Halloween for over a millennia, to no avail. The same tactics that proved so effective with Christmas, Easter, and other holidays have failed to subvert Halloween. Why?

This proves to be a difficult question because great confusion surrounds the relationship between Christianity and paganism in the celebration of ancient holidays. Much of what is widely accepted today as common knowledge is based upon little more than speculation. Christmas—arguably the church's greatest success in subverting paganism—is a particularly good example of this.

The internet is filled with articles and videos decrying the pagan origins of Christmas. Luke Herrington, an award-winning novelist and host of the podcast *Changed My Mind with Luke Herrington,* aptly summarizes the controversy:

> There are two pagan festivals that are usually pointed to as the origin of Christmas, but the evidence for both is pretty thin. The first choice is usually

> the *Saturnalia,* the Roman celebration of the god Saturn, which *does* pre-date Christmas, but leaves one big, gaping hole in the plot: the *Saturnalia* kicked off on December 17 every year, and only went up to the 23rd—so if Christmas began as an attempt by Christians to co-opt the *Saturnalia,* they were literally two days late to the party. Telling people to fast when their friends are partying and then party when their friends are nursing hangovers makes for a lousy way to ease the transition from paganism to Christianity, if that was the intent.
>
> The other usual suspect is the *Sol Invictus,* the "Feast of the Unconquered Sun," which looks like a better choice at first, since it *did* actually take place on December 25. The problem with the *Sol Invictus,* though, is that literally no one celebrated it until Roman emperor Aurelian instituted it in A.D. 274, and Christian references to Christ's birth falling on December 25 date all the way back to the early A.D. 200s. So if anyone was stealing holidays from anyone, you pretty much have to conclude the pagans were stealing them from the Christians.[1]

Associate History Professor and author of *Origins of the Liturgical Year* Thomas Talley agrees:

> Thus, December 25th as the date of the Christ's birth appears to owe nothing whatsoever to pagan influences upon the practice of the Church during or after Constantine's time. It is wholly unlikely to have been the actual date of Christ's birth, but it arose entirely from the efforts of early Latin Christians to determine the historical date of Christ's death.
>
> And the pagan feast which the Emperor Aurelian instituted on that date in the year 274 was not only an

> effort to use the winter solstice to make a political statement, but also almost certainly an attempt to give a pagan significance to a date already of importance to Roman Christians.[2]

The notion that Christians stole the December 25 date from pagans derives from two late 17th and early 18th-century scholars—Paul Ernst Jablonski and Dom Jean Hardouin.[3] This claim was also popularized in D. M. Murdock's 1999 book, *The Christ Conspiracy: The Greatest Story Ever Sold*, written under the pseudonym S. Acharya. Michael Barber, author of *Christmas: What Every Catholic Should Know*, cautions, "Murdock's book has been roundly dismissed by scholars. Even scholars known for skepticism towards the historical reliability of the Gospels such as Bart Ehrman have dunked the book's claims."[4]

There simply is insufficient evidence to substantiate the claim that such holidays as Christmas, Easter, and Halloween were intentional efforts to subvert pagan celebrations by overlaying existing festivals with Christian themes. Nevertheless, there is indication that the Roman Catholic Church deliberately endeavored to subvert pagan celebrations by usurping their symbols and customs, often assigning them new meanings. Michael Barber comments, "This dynamic of taking over things from a previous culture and then using it for Christian purposes … it's kind of part and parcel of the way that the Church operates."[5]

Some Christians decry this tactic as syncretism, usually quoting Jeremiah 10:2 as proof that such methods are sinful: *"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen"* (KJV). However, God's focus appears to be on His people's thoughts and heart motives rather than the customs themselves. Indeed, examples can be found in the Bible where God instructed His people to construct familiar pagan religious objects, only to assign them new meanings. Even the Ark of

the Covenant may fit into this category. Biblical studies and ancient Near East scholar Michael Heiser explains on his *Naked Bible* podcast:

> Conceptually, scholars have argued for the Ark of the Covenant being really (and frankly it is) pretty much the spitting image of an Egyptian palanquin. And then they argue that the cherubim are essentially Israelite versions of the winged goddesses Isis and Nephthys. If you know what a palanquin is, it's a box. I hate to say it this way, but it's like the Ark. It's a box with a lid. On the sides of it and on the two long edges you'll often find an image of Isis and an image of Nephthys on the other piece—two goddesses. They were protective of the content of the Ark. And Egyptians would often put idols of the deity inside the ark and then they'd carry it around to different locations and do this or that—festivals and whatnot.
>
> … Now why is this okay in light of the commandments in Exodus 20? Because you don't bow down to the cherubim. You're not bowing down to the object of the Ark. You're worshipping in your heart and in your mind the Presence—the God of Israel.[6]

Sometimes customs and spiritual beliefs embedded in a culture provide exceptional opportunities to illustrate God's truth. Done right, this is not syncretism; it is redemption. By changing the thoughts stimulated by these customs and practices, these cultural traditions are redeemed. It appears the Ark of the Covenant may have been one such redeemed tradition.

Evergreens as Christmas trees are another prime example of a redeemed cultural tradition. In his article "How Christmas Baptizes Norse Mythology into Powerful Christian Archetypes," Aaron Gleason details why the

evergreen tree at Yule, celebrated on December 25, wonderfully bridges Nordic beliefs with the ministry of Jesus Christ on the cross. Gleason explains:

> To us this seems bizarre and esoteric, but to the north men the finding and the giving of the runes to humanity was equivalent to being made in God's image. Odin wins the runes through his sacrifice of himself, then gives them to humanity. … The North men saw the obvious parallels between Jesus on the cross and Odin on the tree. And that tree was Yggdrasil: the awesome one's gallows, the place where God was hung. Yggdrasil is the cross. … Because of these beliefs, the north men saw in Jesus their own worldview completed. He hung upon the cross, like Odin, for the sake of humanity. By clinging to the cross we can all escape God's wrath in Ragnarok, … And the cross became to them Yggdrasil: the awesome one's gallows, the place where god was sacrificed for us.[7]

Early Christians were not seeking to dilute the purity of their doctrine with pagan ideas; they were trying to change the way people think. Today's critics who point to the pagan origins of popular traditions, like the Christmas tree, often fail to appreciate the redemptive efforts of early Christians to use common customs and religious practices to illustrate the truth of God's Word. Perhaps these were once important symbols in pagan festivals, but no such associations remain in today's celebrations. Instead, many of these ancient symbols are now associated with Christian doctrines. Such change in thinking is a triumph of the Church.

Certainly, some efforts proved to be more successful than others, but overall, it can be argued that Christianity generally succeeded in redeeming many pagan celebrations. Halloween, however, is not among them. Instead,

Halloween still conjures thoughts of Samhain, Druid priests, Occult rituals, and superstitions. Why is it that Christian efforts to subvert Halloween have failed so miserably?

Far from the Church subverting the pagan mindset in Halloween, it is arguably Christian doctrines that have been subverted. At Halloween the devil is championed, evil is portrayed as stronger than good, darkness is celebrated, and fear triumphs. Perhaps the key to understanding why rests in the Christian message preached at Halloween. At a time when society fixated on the problem of evil and the threat of death, Christians chose to embrace death rather than celebrate life. By memorializing martyrs, Christians emphasized the triumph of death and evil against God's people rather than the saints' entrance into glory and their conviction that God will judge evil. The implicit message is that evil does reign, and death comes to all.

Fundamentally, how is this any different from the conclusions of the surrounding society, which was endeavoring to protect itself from unknown evils and death? Certainly, there were Christian efforts to sanctify pagan customs, but the essence of these practices remained unchanged. They remained fixated on death. The trapped soul in the jack-o-lantern became an escaped soul from purgatory instead of Stingy Jack's spirit.[8] Mummers still stood between worlds, but now they prayed for the souls of dead loved ones rather than chase away spirits. And guisers continued to dress like the dead—only now it was to celebrate departed saints rather than hide from malicious spirits.

Where is the transforming power of the gospel message in these practices? Where is the hope? At no point did the Roman Catholic Church offer an alternative solution to the problems of evil and death. Far from offering hope, even Christians found themselves filled with fear that their loved

ones may be imprisoned in purgatory—or worse yet, that they themselves may eventually be confined to purgatory.

This aberrant doctrine was eventually made official Church dogma in the Second Council of Lyons:

> If those who are truly repentant die in charity before they have done sufficient penance for their sins of omission and commission, their souls are cleansed after death in purgatorial or cleansing punishments.
>
> The suffrages of the faithful on earth can be of great help in relieving these punishments, as, for instance, the Sacrifice of the Mass, prayers, almsgiving, and other religious deeds which, in the manner of the Church, the faithful are accustomed to offer for others of the faithful.[9]

A tremendous amount of "energy went into understanding purgatory, teaching people about it, and in particular, arranging life in the present in relation to it."[10]

This faulty doctrine of purgatory fostered an atmosphere of superstition and fear nearly indistinguishable from the pagans. However, the Protestant view of the afterlife, which grew out of the Reformation, rejected this doctrine, pointing to Luke 23:43 where Jesus told the criminal on the cross, *"I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."* On the cross Jesus assumed the punishment for our sins: *"He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all"* (Isa. 53:5–6). Because of this, Christians can take assurance in Psalm 103:10–12: *"[God] does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as*

the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west."

Faulty doctrine produces faulty application. For centuries, the Church was incapable of subverting Halloween because of its faulty doctrine regarding the efficacy of Jesus' death on the cross. Without a proper understanding of the gospel, Christians can never successfully redeem Halloween. Moreover, until we can offer society superior solutions to the problems of evil, death, and fear, Halloween will never be successfully subverted. This requires far more effort and intentionality than including gospel tracts with our overly generous treats for trick-or-treaters. In the meantime, we run a very real risk of subverting our own faith through cultural immersion (Jer. 10:2).

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. Early Christians saw value in utilizing cultural traditions and religious customs to communicate God's truth. Do you agree with this tactic? Why?

II. In what ways did the faulty doctrine of purgatory undermine the Church's efforts to subvert Halloween?

III. Why do Protestants reject the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory?

IV. The statement was made, "For centuries, the Church was incapable of subverting Halloween because of its faulty doctrine regarding the efficacy of Jesus' death on the cross. Without a proper understanding of the gospel, Christians can never successfully redeem Halloween" Do you agree with this statement? Why?

    A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

V. The statement was made, "Until we can offer society superior solutions to the problems of evil, death, and fear, Halloween will never be successfully subverted." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

VI. Do Christians who seek to redeem Halloween without being adequately prepared to offer society superior solutions to the problems of evil, death, and fear risk subverting their own faith through cultural immersion? Why?

A. How prepared are you to offer superior solutions to the problems of evil, death, and fear?

13. Should Christians Celebrate Halloween?

The task of redeeming Halloween may have national implications, but *how* we choose to navigate Halloween is a deeply personal matter. Just because we can imagine ways to sanctify Halloween does not mean that God has called us to celebrate the holiday. It may be that God has called us to reject Halloween. In our efforts to redeem the holiday, each of us must grapple with the question of which aspects of Halloween are permissible for Christians to celebrate. Moreover, to what degree is it wise for us to participate in the holiday's festivities?

Navigating Halloween and its celebrations can be confusing for Christians seeking to honor God, but not everything about the holiday is ambiguous. Just as God is not honored by Christians who celebrate monsters whom God detests, so also God is not honored by Christians who celebrate darkness and evil through their choice of holiday decorations and costuming: *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, … Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. … Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead*

expose them. … Do not imitate evil but imitate good" (Isa. 5:20; Rom. 12:9; Eph. 5:11; 3 John 1:11, ESV).

To dress in costume is the very definition of imitation. At the very least, the above verses prohibit emulating a vampire, zombie, witch, serial killer, evil clown, or any number of additional evil characters. Similarly, it prohibits dressing as a sexy nurse, naughty schoolgirl, frisky feline, gigolo, or in any other provocative manner that encourages others to stumble into the sin of lust (Matt. 5:27–28). God's standard rests not in whether these characters are fictional but in whether these characters promote what is good.

Likewise, this standard extends to our holiday decorations. Christians should not imitate darkness and evil by converting our lawns into hellscapes. We ought to reject decorations of grim reapers, skeletons, witches, ghosts, and other such symbols of evil—even those that are cartoonish and "fun." Instead, Christians should choose decorations that comport to the standard offered in Philippians 4:8: *"Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."* There remains plenty of fun and innocent Halloween ornaments from which we may choose.

Moreover, Halloween is not an excuse for debauchery and Occultism. We do not set aside our Christian identity on Halloween. It is not uncommon to find drunkenness, provocative dancing, flirtatiousness, gender-bending, Occult dabbling, and other illicit practices at Halloween parties, but Halloween is not an excuse for us to behave in ways we wouldn't at any other time of the year. The Bible commands, *"Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you"* (Eph. 5:3–4). Likewise, *"You have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your*

freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love" (Gal. 5:13).

Finally, Christians should avoid haunted attractions. At the very least, they encourage us to forget that *"the Spirit who lives in [us] is greater than the spirit who lives in the world"* (1 John 4:4). More importantly, most haunted attractions include themes of ghosts, serial killers, asylums, prisons, zombies, and all manner of evil and depravity. We are to flee from such unrighteousness (1 Tim. 6:11).

While it may be fun and acceptable to experience the thrill of being frightened, we are warned against trivializing and underestimating our supernatural adversaries (2 Pet. 2:10–11; Jude 1:8–9). Moreover, Christians who truly abhor evil would not willingly seek amusement at such places. After all, *"What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?"* (2 Cor. 6:14, ESV). Likewise, *"Once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord"* (Eph. 5:8–10).

God is the God of the living, but Halloween focuses on death (Mark 12:27). Jesus came to defeat death and to give us hope. How, then, is celebrating death and despair God-honoring? How does chasing after unclean spirits in pursuit of fun please the Lord? Such thinking is a betrayal of God: *"You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord's Table and at the table of demons, too. What? Do we dare to rouse the Lord's jealousy? Do you think we are stronger than he is?"* (1 Cor. 10:21–22).

Without question, some aspects of Halloween do not please the Lord. There is a side of Halloween that trivializes malevolent spirits; dabbles in the Occult, champions death, promotes evil; mocks goodness; disparages the Christian

hope; and that celebrates darkness, perversion, and wickedness. As Christians, we are to *"have nothing to do"* with these aspects of Halloween (Eph. 5:11, NIV). We cannot justify participating in such wickedness, as 1 Thessalonians 5:22 commands us to *"reject every kind of evil."* If these are in mind when we ask whether Christians should celebrate Halloween, then the answer is a resounding, "No!" But it is not necessary that we include these in our Halloween festivities.

This dark side of Halloween has always been present to some degree, yet there remains another side of the holiday that fosters community, creativity, and imaginative fun. These could be the focus of our celebration, yet there are those who challenge that Christians should have nothing to do with even these aspects of Halloween, merely because they are associated with the same holiday. In other words, it may be that even seemingly innocuous office parties, costume parties, and trick or treat somehow promote the evils of Halloween that are forbidden to Christians.

Such a view belies the history and development of Halloween which has always meant different things to different people. There is no universal Halloween experience. Irrespective of its origins, development, marketing, or even its significance to some religious groups, Halloween represents, for many Americans today, nothing more than an opportunity to dress up and enjoy a family night out, collecting candy from friends and strangers alike. For others, Halloween is simply a chance to engage with children and neighbors who otherwise avoid knocking on their doors.

There is nothing about dressing in costumes, visiting neighbors' homes, or asking for candy that contradicts God's standard for behavior. Neither is there anything inherently immoral about office parties. Therefore, we should have no qualms about participating in such activities. However, our

culture does not always distinguish those who celebrate only the communal aspects of Halloween from those who embrace its darker side. As such, we may risk creating unnecessary confusion because we may appear hypocritical to those who are content to assume that our celebration of one side of Halloween proves our acceptance of its other side as well.

Indeed, some may question, "How can Christians celebrate what Occultists and neo-pagans revere as an important festival in their religious practices?" Our participation in any aspect of Halloween—even the most innocuous—creates a very real possibility of sowing confusion, thus begging the question, "Is the threat of missing the fun involved in Halloween worth the risk to our testimony?" On the other hand, we could just as easily risk our testimony by refusing to celebrate Halloween. In how we choose to abstain, we may risk portraying Christianity as being anti-fun and overly critical. By ignoring the holiday entirely, we may indicate that our faith is not culturally relevant. Or we may convey a spirit of self-righteousness and judgmentalism if we condemn the holiday.

These are difficult conundrums, and the answers are almost certainly conditional based upon each person's unique circumstances. There simply is no cookie-cutter approach to successfully navigating Halloween. Instead, how we handle Halloween is a matter of personal conscience (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8). The very thing that is right for one Christian may be wrong for another.

Importantly, matters of conscience only relate to issues not clearly identified in the Bible as being wrong. For example, a Christian is not free to attend a séance at Halloween because his conscience is clear. In such an instance, his conscience is either ignorant of the truth, seared, or is confusing truth with personal desire because the Bible clearly forbids communication with the dead

(Deut. 18:10–12). Our conscience can convert something that is generally acceptable into something that is personally unacceptable, but it can never act in reverse. It can never change something that is inherently wrong into something that is proper.

Given that our minds have an incredible ability to justify any personal desire—whether righteous or unrighteous—we cannot allow personal feelings to determine matters of conscience. Instead, we ought to question how God may feel when watching us (1 Cor. 10:31). Our chief concern ought to be whether God will be glorified and accurately represented by our decision: *"Whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father"* (Col. 3:17).

The Bible provides two litmus tests to help us determine whether we are glorifying God in our representation of Him. The first is simply to question whether our decision is helpful or enslaving: *"You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'—but not everything is good for you. And even though 'I am allowed to do anything,' I must not become a slave to anything"* (1 Cor. 6:12). The second is to determine whether our actions are likely to create confusion among others regarding what is right and wrong (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8; 10:23–33).

It is difficult to forego something we enjoy simply because there are some who are easily confused. Nevertheless, we are commanded to take into account how our actions may affect them. In fact, the Bible warns against risking the work God is doing in their lives for the sake of a temporary pleasure (Rom. 14:20). The Apostle Paul concludes, *"It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble"* (Rom. 14:21).

It is only when we adopt this mindset that we can accurately represent Jesus Christ who always put the needs

of others above His own: *"We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't live to please himself"* (Rom. 15:1–3).

Because our approach to Halloween is a matter of personal conscience and is influenced by the maturity, experiences, and perspective of those around us, our decision on how best to navigate Halloween may vary over time. There may be seasons of life where it would be wise to reject the holiday and all of its traditions. However, as our circumstances change, our stance regarding Halloween may also shift. Perhaps we feel it is important to reject Halloween when our children are too young to differentiate between the spiritual and communal sides of the holiday. However, as our children grow, Halloween may begin to afford unique opportunities for meaningful celebrations and relationship. Then, a time may come when we again find ourselves rejecting the holiday. Perhaps we acquire grandchildren who cannot discern the holiday. Perhaps we find ourselves ministering to someone with experience in spiritualism and the Occult. Or perhaps we have family members and friends who discover the "evils" of Christians celebrating Halloween, necessitating sensitivity on our part.

At times along our journey, we are likely to find ourselves in a different season of life and personal conviction than many of our neighbors, friends, and family members. In such a case, grace is necessary. When dealing with matters of conscience it is entirely possible for something to be perfectly fine for one party while being downright sinful for another. In fact, the Apostle Paul teaches that engaging in a practice we suspect is sinful is itself a sin—even if it turns out the activity isn't inherently evil (Rom. 14:23). Where there is doubt, one ought to rule on the side of caution and abstain.

Keep in mind that just as our experiences in life are not static, so also our convictions regarding matters of conscience may change over time. The less dogmatic and critical we are in explaining our convictions, the less sheepish we will be if we grow out of those convictions with further study and maturity.

Regardless of how we decide in matters of conscience, each of us must guard against becoming critical and judgmental of those who decide differently (Rom. 14:1; 15:1). Christians who celebrate Halloween should not look down upon those who do not. Likewise, those who abstain from celebrating Halloween should not judge and condemn those who choose to celebrate it. Instead, each ought to trust that the other is doing their best to honor God in their decision (Rom. 14:4–6; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Halloween is a complicated holiday whose social meaning and significance is continually in flux. Navigating such a holiday is challenging, and there will always be those who disagree with our conclusion. Therefore, let us follow the principle found in 1 Corinthians 10:31: *"So whether you [sanctify Halloween] or [reject Halloween], or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."*

Whatever decision we make on matters of conscience, we ought always to honor God and to oppose those aspects of Halloween that are anti-Christ. One of the best ways to ensure that we do not create confusion if we choose to embrace the communal aspects of Halloween while rejecting its evils is to consistently and publicly live out our faith. If our neighbors, friends, and family know our loyalty is to God and see a lifestyle that matches what we say we believe, then they will be far less inclined to assume the worst if they see us either celebrating or rejecting Halloween. In many ways, how we choose to navigate Halloween will be dictated by how we choose to navigate the remaining 364 days of the year.

Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They are particularly designed for Sunday school and small groups.

I. Whose decision is it how we choose to navigate Halloween?

   A. Does our ability to imagine ways to sanctify Halloween mean that God has called us to celebrate the holiday?

II. What are some aspects of Halloween that are clearly inappropriate for Christians?

III. Is our Christian identity suspended at Halloween? Explain.

   A. Should Halloween serve as an excuse to behave in ways we wouldn't at any other time of the year? Why?

IV. The statement was made, "Christians who truly abhor evil would not willingly seek amusement at such places." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

   A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

V. Is the celebration of death and despair God-honoring? Why?

VI. The statement was made, "Halloween has always meant different things to different people." Do you agree with this statement? Explain.

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

VII. Is there anything about dressing in costumes, visiting neighbors' homes, or asking for candy that contradicts God's standard for behavior? Explain.

VIII. How would you answer the question, "How can Christians celebrate what Occultists and neo-pagans revere as an important festival in their religious practices?"

IX. The statement was made, "Given that our minds have an incredible ability to justify any personal desire—whether righteous or unrighteous—we cannot allow personal feelings to determine matters of conscience. Instead, we ought to question how God may feel when watching us." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

X. What are the Bible's two litmus tests for helping us determine whether we are glorifying God in our representation of Him?

XI. Why is it important to recognize that how we choose to navigate Halloween may change depending upon our circumstances and season of life?

XII. What is the best way to prevent confusion among our neighbors, friends, and family regarding how we choose to balance Halloween with our faith?

XIII. The statement was made, "In many ways, how we choose to navigate Halloween will be dictated by how we choose to navigate the remaining 364 days of the year." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

A. If so, how should this influence the way we think about Halloween?

Appendix A
Samhain – The Religious Festival That Never Was?

A remarkably rich and comprehensive account exists regarding the celebration of Samhain, considering that "we are not able to find any evidence of the observation of Samhain before the 9th century," where it is referenced in Irish literature.[1] Historian Ronald Hutton admits that "we have virtually no idea" what rites were celebrated because "northern European pagans were illiterate, and no record remains of their ceremonies."[2] Moreover, nearly everything we know of the holiday comes from Celtic mythology and questionable second-hand accounts of historians. Thus, it may be that the similarities between Samhain traditions and later Halloween celebrations are remarkably similar because folklorists have assigned to the primitive festival of Samhain customs that would only develop centuries later, based upon their assumption of how history ought to have developed. Essentially, this may be a form of historical eisegesis.

Given the available historical evidence—or lack thereof—it is perhaps a bit brash of folklorists and neo-pagans to confidently declare Samhain "the most sacred of

all Celtic festivals."[3] Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to find matter-of-fact explanations, such as that by the History Channel: "Samhain is a pagan religious festival originating from an ancient Celtic spiritual tradition. … Ancient Celts marked Samhain as the most significant of the four quarterly fire festivals, taking place at the midpoint between the fall equinox and the winter solstice."[4]

Lutheran pastor Joseph Abrahamson argues that neo-pagans have made assertions about Samhain which are "patently false," noting that "most of their claims are based on an intellectual heritage that comes through the Folklorists of the 19th and early 20th centuries—which itself was deeply influenced by the wealth of philosophy, arts, and literature from the Romantic movement (particularly Gothic fiction)."[5] Perhaps we would be wise to consider that nearly everything we think we know about Samhain involves some degree of speculation.

Folklorist Dr. Jenny Butler explains that even the definition of Samhain as "summer's end" is conjecture: "The word might be a linguistic inversion of the Irish-language term samhradh (summer) so that Samhain means 'summer's end', from samh, 'summer' and fuin, 'end'. Thus, Samhain was the festival that marked the 'New Year.'"[6] However, this assumption is far from certain. Indeed, Whitley Stokes argued in 1907 for an etymology derived from the Proto-Celtic *samani*, meaning "assembly."[7] In 1959, J. Vendryes considered Stokes' etymology and agreed that *semo* (summer), and related cognates are unrelated to Samhain—meaning that it likely does not mean "summer's end."[8]

Even the notion that Samhain served as the Celtic new year is uncertain. According to the *New World Encyclopedia*:

> During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Celtic Revival, there was an upswell of interest in Samhain and the other Celtic festivals. The *Tochmarc*

> *Emire*, written in the Middle Ages, reckoned the year around the four festivals at the beginning of each season, and put Samhain at the beginning of those.
>
> In the Hibbert Lectures in 1886, Welsh scholar Sir **John Rhys set out the idea that Samhain was the "Celtic New Year."[9] This he inferred from folklore in Wales and Ireland, and [a] visit to the Isle of Man where he found that the Manx sometimes called October 31st "New Year's Night" or *Hog-unnaa*.** Rhys's theory was popularized by Sir James George Frazer [in his influential but factually questionable book, *The Golden Bough*], though at times he did acknowledge that the evidence is inconclusive. Since then, Samhain has been seen as the Celtic New Year (emphasis added).[10]

In his work *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia,* John Koch argues that the Celtic new year may have been either Samhain *or* Beltaine. Beltaine is the antithesis of Samhain, being a May 1st festival at the beginning of summer that celebrates the light half of the year.[11] Both festivals were significant seasonal markers, but it is unclear which served to mark the new year.

Conclusive and contextualized facts regarding ancient Samhain traditions simply are not readily available. Jean Markale, an historian specializing in Celtic studies, admits that Irish epics and mythological tales—from which we gather much of our understanding of Samhain—are "presented in a disorderly fashion—sometimes out of context, and sometimes even in contradiction."[12] The Celts worshipped hundreds of deities and forbid written records of their rituals and mythology.[13] Those stories we do have were transcribed from oral tradition centuries later, often by those who had a vested interest in either portraying the Celts as barbarians or in Christianizing their customs. Former

Editor of *The Journal of American Folklore* and President of the American Folklore Society, Jack Santino, writes:

> Most of what we know of Samhain is contained in the ancient Irish sagas, but these were not written down until sometime between the 9th and 12th centuries, while the missionaries had arrived by the 5th century A.D. By the time these sagas were written, then, the festival had been undergoing pressure to incorporate Christian form and content for several centuries.[14]

Similarly, W. J. Bethancourt notes, "Unfortunately, most of what we have on them from pre-Christian times was written by their mortal enemies: the Roman Empire. To take what the Romans said about the Druids as fact is rather like taking what the Romans said about Christians as fact." Bethancourt then provides a 1st-century Roman account of Christianity:

> As for the initiation of new members, the details are as disgusting as they are well known. The novice himself, deceived by the coating of dough (covering a sacrificial infant), thinks the stabs are harmless. Then, it's horrible! They hungrily drink the blood and compete with one another as they divide his limbs. And the fact they all share knowledge of the crime pledges them all to silence. On the feast-day they foregather with all their children, sisters, mothers, people of either sex and all ages. Now, in the dark, so favorable to shameless behavior, they twine the bonds of unnamable passion, as chance decides. Precisely the secrecy of this evil religion proves that all these things, or practically all, are true.[15]

Obviously, this Roman account bears little association with historical Christianity, as is now well documented. Given such egregious misrepresentation of Christian customs, it would be foolish to unquestioningly assume the historical accuracy of Rome's account of Celtic customs. In his book, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, Jean Markale details several Celtic rituals and traditions that were grossly distorted by ancient historians, such as the burning wicker man. According to Julius Caesar, the Gauls "have large mannequins with willow sides, which they fill with living men; they set them afire, and the men inside die, enveloped by the flames."[16] Likewise, the ancient Greek historian Strabo writes that the Gauls "manufactured a colossus out of wood and straw, then filled it with both wild and domestic animals as well as with men, then burned the entire thing."[17]

Markale argues that these accounts are likely distortions of an initiation ritual. The initiate would sit on a bench inside a bottle-shaped hole in the ground while a miniature cabin formed from scraps of hemp burned above him. The fumes of the hemp inhaled by the initiate would produce a transcendental experience, allowing the initiate to travel into the beyond. Thus, this custom was likely nothing more than an initiatory death—a symbolic sacrifice—wherein one could acquire an inner vision of the Otherworld.[18]

The wicker man account suggests that reports of human sacrifice by the Celts may have been nothing more than exaggerations of symbolic rites. It is unlikely there was ever a ritual involving a wicker man filled with burning human sacrifices. "Without a doubt, the most dramatic account of human sacrifice came from the pens of Strabo, Julius Caesar, and Diodorus, all of whom referred to the huge human-like wicker structures into which living men were cast before they perished in fire," observes Nicholas Rogers, Professor of History at York University.[19] However, he notes:

> Julius Caesar, Strabo, and Diodorus decried the practice of human sacrifice at a time when the Roman world no longer thought it compatible with civilization. These were not first-hand accounts but scholarly ruminations on the beliefs, superstitions, and practices of the 'barbarous peoples' north of the Alps. Moreover, they were mainly negative constructs prompted by what the authors saw as dramatic affronts to civilized society.[20]

Although it is generally agreed that the Celts did occasionally practice human sacrifices, it is unknown whether the Celts offered such sacrifices during the festival of Samhain.[21, 22] In his *Encyclopedia on Religion and Ethics,* James Hastings suggests that, at Samhain, the slaying of a human representative of the corn-spirit—or of some divinity of growth—was offered as a propitiatory sacrifice.[23] Perhaps referencing the same custom, Philip Freeman suggests in his book, *The Philosopher and the Druids,* that if human sacrifices occurred, they were likely criminals who had already been sentenced to death. He references an account by the ancient Greek historian Posidonius that indicates such rituals were unusual—perhaps only occurring once every five years as part of the harvest festival: "The Gauls will keep a criminal under guard for five years, then impale him on a pole in honor of their gods. They will then burn his body on an enormous pyre along with first fruits of the land."[24]

Regarding the Celts, one of the most influential historians has been an Irish Roman Catholic priest named Geoffrey Keating (1569–1644 A.D.). Like the Roman historians, Keating's account has been called into question. Pastor Abrahamson writes, "Keating's account of the Feast of Tara and his treatment of Samhain has been found to be creative anachronistic fiction by Daniel [Binchy].[25]"[26] Nevertheless, Keating serves as the primary source

referenced by those who have had the greatest influence in shaping our understanding of Samhain. These include John Rhys—the first professor of Celtic at Oxford University and the first to suggest that Samhain was the Celtic new year celebration[27]—and James Frazer—a Scottish social anthropologist who was influential in the early stages of the modern studies of folklore, mythology, and comparative religion and the first to suggest that Samhain was an ancient pan-Celtic festival of the dead usurped by the Roman Catholic Church.[28, 29]

Furthermore, 15th-century manuscripts of an early Irish glossary with etymologies and explanations for over 1,400 words do not mention Samhain. The May festival of Beltaine and its accompanying rituals are referenced, indicating that Samhain was not eliminated because of a religious prejudice against pagan festivals. Thus, it is difficult to understand how a festival assumed to be the most sacred and important among the Celts would be ignored when Beltaine is specifically mentioned—unless Samhain was not as significant as folklorists assume.[30]

The scant number of historical references and questionable historical accounts sustaining our knowledge of Samhain has led some to question whether the festival of Samhain is truly as ancient and widespread among the Celts as we've been told.[31] Perhaps Samhain only slightly predates the arrival of Christianity in Ireland? Perhaps the manner in which Samhain was celebrated varied considerably among the Celtic people groups? Perhaps Samhain was not a universally celebrated festival?

Indeed, a narrative from the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology, known as "The Only Jealousy of Emer," indicates that the festivities of Samhain may have begun with the men of Ulster before eventually being adopted by "the whole of Ireland:"

> EVERY year the men of Ulster were accustomed to hold festival together; and the time when they held it was for three days before Samhain, the Summer-End, and for three days after that day, and upon Samhain itself. And the time that is spoken of is that when the men of Ulster were in the Plain of Murthemne, and there they used to keep that festival every year; nor was there an thing in the world that they would do at that time except sports, and marketings, and splendours, and pomps, and feasting and eating; and it is from that custom of theirs that the Festival of the Samhain has descended, that is now held throughout the whole of Ireland.[32]

Interestingly, this account not only indicates that Samhain was originally a local custom, but it also makes no reference to rituals or religious practices. Of course, this could be because the account was likely penned in the 10th or 11th century A.D., well after the Roman Catholic Church's effort to Christianize pagan customs. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that Samhain was originally little more than a local harvest celebration centered around food and festivities. It may have been celebrated with a whole variety of customs as the significance of Samhain spread among the Celts, and it would not be surprising if, over time, at least some of these customs incorporated religious elements. After all, pagan cultures like the Celts were highly superstitious, often finding spiritual significance in even the most mundane facets of life.

Regardless, far less is known about the customs, traditions, and antiquity of Samhain than today's folklorists and neo-pagans would have us believe. Efforts to assign a deep Occult heritage to the holiday are questionable at best. It may be more likely that Samhain was simply a cultural recognition of transformation: The days shortened as the

light half of the year transitioned into the dark half; a season of fertility transitioned into a season dominated by death and disease; animals were slaughtered and turned into food; grains, fruits, and vegetables were transformed for winter storage; and the year's labor concluded as people prepared to wait-out the cold.

Civilizations throughout time have celebrated the harvest as they prepare for a change of season.[33] The Celts were no exception. For some this may have involved religious rites; for others it may have simply involved reveling in cultural festivities. Without more conclusive evidence, we have little reason to believe that Samhain was a deeply spiritual festival. Indeed, it may be that today's celebrations of Samhain are more religious and Occultic than anything practiced by the ancient Celts.

Appendix B
Historic Divination Rituals

Below are some additional historical examples of popular divination rituals, mostly practiced by young maidens, identified by Robert Burns, Lesley Bannatyne, and Lisa Morton.

- "Dumb suppers" were prepared and served backwards in total silence, hoping for a spectral form to appear in the shape of one's future spouse.[1] Others swallowed a thimbleful of salt before bed in silence, hoping that their future husband would come offer them a drink during the night. "If he came with a gold cup, he would be very rich; with a silver cup, just well-to-do; with a wooden cup, very poor."[2]

- Tossing a ball of yarn out a window or into a house, barn, cellar, or kiln, the maiden awaited a tug on the yarn. Once the tug was felt, she would call, "Who holds?" hoping to hear the name of her future husband.[3] Others wound a ball of yarn while looking straight ahead and walking around the outside of their house, repeating, "Whoever will my husband

be; Come wind this ball behind me." From behind might appear their future spouse, holding the rewound ball of yarn. Still others chose to recite at midnight, "I wind, I wind, my true love to find; The color of his hair, the clothes he will wear; The day he is married to me." The image of their lover may then appear and help wind the yarn.[4]

- Hanging a wet shirt to dry overnight, maidens hoped to witness their future spouse appear during the night to turn it.[5]

- Often using chestnuts, walnuts, or hazelnuts, two nuts were named for potential lovers before being placed upon a grate in the fire. If the nut burned hot and steady, it indicated that the lover would have a faithful nature, but if it popped in the heat, the man could not be trusted.[6]

- Small objects might be placed inside walnut shells that were then tied together. The couple that could match two objects were destined for marriage.[7]

- Participants chose walnut shells to use as boats carrying lighted candles. Their movement towards or away from one another revealed future relationships.[8]

- A concoction of walnut, hazelnut, nutmeg, butter, and sugar may be taken before bed on the night of Halloween to induce prophetic dreams.[9]

- Three bowls could be placed upon the floor, one containing clean water, another dirty water, and the third was nothing. A blindfolded maiden would dip

her hands into one of the bowls to divine her love life. The clean water meant she would marry a virgin; the dirty water meant she would be widowed, and the empty bowl meant she would live forever unloved and unmarried.[10] During World War II, the bowls were filled with colored pieces of cloth, revealing to which branch of the military the maiden's future spouse belonged.[11]

Appendix C
Spiked Halloween Candy – An Urban Legend

Social strife, sensational news reports, a growing mistrust of strangers, increased awareness of child abuse, and an ambivalence toward random violence gave rise in the 1970s to one of Halloween's most persistent urban myths: *Strangers may spike Halloween candy with drugs, poison, razor blades, or needles*.[1, 2] Cautionary tales of faceless Halloween sadists have long persisted, but "the general perception that Halloween sadism is a serious threat can be dated to the early 1970s," according to sociologists and criminal justice experts, Joel Best and Gerald Horiuchi.[3] Despite being thoroughly debunked by folklorists, sociologists, and law enforcement officials,[4] approximately 24% of parents with children under the age of 12 remain concerned about poisoned treats.[5]

The seed for this fear was planted in 1959 when a California dentist named William Shyne distributed around 450 laxatives to unsuspecting trick-or-treaters.[6] By 1970 unsubstantiated rumors abounded. These were leant

credibility by the *New York Times* in its article "Those Treats May Be Tricks":

> Those Halloween goodies that children collect this weekend on their rounds of "trick-or-treating" may bring them more horror than happiness.
>
> Take for example, that plump red apple that Junior gets from a kindly old woman down the block. It may have a razor blade hidden inside. The chocolate "candy" bar may be a laxative, the bubble gum may be sprinkled with lye, the pop corn balls may be coated with camphor, the candy may turn out to be packets containing sleeping pills.[7]

Despite the *Times'* warning that "the number of incidents involving poisonous or otherwise harmful 'treats' given to young hobgoblins on Halloween has been growing at a rapid rate," such reports remain negligible. Joel Best, who literally wrote the book on this subject, has documented only 92 news reports between 1958 and 2012.[8, 9] Systematic efforts to follow-up on these accounts have concluded that "virtually all the reports were hoaxes."[10]

Even including the hoaxes, "these reports are not very common," concludes Best, and "the incidents are not very serious."[11] In fact, the only known deaths involving Halloween candy involve no strangers. In 1970 the *New York Times* reported, "A 5-year-old boy who had eaten Halloween candy laced with heroin died today without regaining consciousness."[12] However, it was eventually revealed that the boy's family had contrived the evidence to hide the truth that the boy had swallowed a heroin capsule from his drug-dealing uncle's stash.[13, 14]

In 1974 the *New York Times* again reported, "The Harris County medical examiner said today that an 8-year-old boy had died of cyanide poisoning from eating Halloween

candy."[15] However, it was later determined that the boy's father, Ronald O'Bryan, had murdered his son. Hailed by the media as "the Candyman," O'Bryan added the poison to a giant pixie stick and gave it to his son in an effort to collect on the child's life insurance policy.[16]

Decades later, the *New York Times* would report, "In both these cases, the danger came – as a Halloween-themed movie might demand it – from inside the house: from relatives, not strangers."[17] There simply is insufficient evidence to merit the widespread fear of strangers spiking Halloween candy. Instead, Joel Best and Gerald Horiuchi conclude:

> Long celebrated through vandalism and extortion, Halloween has been a symbolic expression of disorder. Today, the Halloween sadist has become an annual reminder of the fragility of the social bond – an expression of growing doubts about the safety of children, the trustworthiness of strangers, and the strength of the modern urban community.[18]

End Notes

****IMPORTANT** AUTHOR'S NOTE**

1. "Pearl S. Buck Quotes," *BrainyQuote*, n.d. accessed July 31, 2020, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/pearl_s_buck_383096.
2. Kevin McSpadden, "You Now Have a Shorter Attention Span Than a Goldfish," Health, *TIME*, May 14, 2015, 5:09 a.m., EDT, https://time.com/3858309/attention-spans-goldfish/.
3. Simon Maybin, "Busting the Attention Span Myth," Health, *BBC*, March 10, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/health-38896790.
4. Neil Bradbury, "Attention Span During Lectures: 8 Seconds, 10 Minutes, or More?" *Advances in Physiology Education* 40, no. 4 (2016): 509–513, https://journals.physiology.org/doi/pdf/10.1152/advan.00109.2016.

PREFACE

1. Julia Belluz and Javier Zarracina, "All the Candy That's Sold During Halloween Week, in One Massive Pumpkin," *Vox*, n.d., last updated October 30, 2018, 7:15 a.m., EDT, https://www.vox.com/2016/10/29/13408370/halloween-candy-market-obesity.
2. According to 2018 National Retail Federation surveys, Americans planned to spend $2.6 billion on Halloween candy and $2.6 billion on Easter candy. ("Halloween Spending to Reach $9 Billion," *National Retail Federation*, September 20, 2018, https://nrf.com/media-center/press-releases/halloween-spending-reach-9-billion.)

3. "Social Media Influencing Near-Record Halloween Spending," *National Retail Federation*, September 25, 2019, https://nrf.com/media-center/press-releases/social-media-influencing-near-record-halloween-spending.

1. A TRICKY HOLIDAY

1. Carol Pipes, "A Third of Americans Avoid Halloween or Its Pagan Elements," *Lifeway Research,* October 26, 2015, https://lifewayresearch.com/2015/10/26/a-third-of-americans-avoid-halloween-or-its-pagan-elements.
2. Faith Ascent Staff, "Halloween, Satanism, and 21st Century Devil Worship," *Faith Ascent Blog*, November 1, 2016, https://faithascentministries.com/halloween-satanism-and-21st-century-devil-worship.
3. The Church of Satan (@ChurchofSatan), "Every year around Halloween this meme makes the rounds. As far as we know it's fake. Anton LaVey never said this. In trying to find an original source we can only find various Christian websites referencing each other. There are no interviews or sources ever cited." Twitter, October 30, 2020, 4:03 p.m., https://twitter.com/ChurchofSatan/status/1322267950808662017.
4. Kashmira Gander, "A Satanist on Why Everything You Think You Know about His Religion Is Wrong," *Independent*, June 2, 2017, 10:00 a.m., https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/satanist-reverend-religions-everything-know-facts-devil-worship-church-ashley-s-palmer-a7767641.html.
5. "Anton S. LaVey Dies at 67," *Washington Post*, November 9, 1997, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1997/11/09/anton-s-lavey-dies-at-67/c546b323-acb9-463e-ad96-7da298f9e4d8.
6. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 95.
7. Russell Goldman, "Real Witches Practice Samhain: Wicca on the Rise in U.S.," *ABC News*, October 30, 2009, https://abcnews.go.com/WN/real-witches-practice-samhain-wicca-rise-us/story?id=8957950.
8. *Merriam-Webster,* s.v. "Sabbat," accessed June 29, 2020. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sabbat.
9. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 95.
10. Michael Tortorello, "If a Druid Rings the Doorbell," *New York Times*, October 30, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/31/garden/if-a-druid-rings-the-doorbell.html.

11. Gaia Staff, "Modern Paganism: 13 Rituals to Celebrate Samhain," *Gaia*, n.d., accessed November 4, 2019, https://www.gaia.com/article/modern-paganism-13-rituals-celebrate-samhain.
12. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 171.
13. Morton, 9.
14. Morton, 11.
15. Patti Wigington, "Samhain Is Not a God," *Learn Religions*, n.d., last updated October 23, 2019, https://www.learnreligions.com/samhain-is-not-a-god-2562732.
16. *Should Christians Observe Halloween?* (Martin: Bible Baptist Publications, 2005), http://www.biblebaptistpublications.org/halloweentract.html.
17. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 170.
18. Morton, 171.
19. Angie Mosteller, *Christian Origins of Halloween* (Peabody: Rose Publishing, 2012), 4.
20. Mosteller, *Christian Origins of Halloween*, 5.

2. THE CELTIC FESTIVAL OF SAMHAIN

1. Russell Goldman, "Real Witches Practice Samhain: Wicca on the Rise in U.S," *ABC News*, October 30, 2009, https://abcnews.go.com/WN/real-witches-practice-samhain-wicca-rise-us/story?id=8957950.
2. Kevin Danaher, *The Year in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1972), 5.
3. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 11.
4. Jack Santino, "Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs and Performances," *Western Folklore* 42, no. 1 (2008): 5, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1499461.
5. Jean Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween: Celebrating the Dark Half of the Year* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2001), 20.
6. "Tiding of Conchobar Son of Ness," Trans. Ed. Whitley Stokes, *Ériu*, Vol. IV, n.a., 1910.
7. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 21.
8. Lesley Bannatyne, *Halloween: An American Holiday, an American History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 2.
9. Admin, "The Coligny Calendar," Roman Britain Organisation, n.d., accessed November 4, 2019, http://www.roman-britain.org/the-coligny-calendar.
10. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 13.

11. Markale, 13.
12. Joseph Abrahamson, "Redeeming Holy Days from Pagan Lies: All Saints' Day/Eve and Samhain," *The Brothers of John the Steadfast*, October 30, 2014, https://steadfastlutherans.org/2014/10/redeeming-holy-days-from-pagan-lies-all-saints-dayeve-and-samhain.
13. Joshua Mark, "History of Halloween," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, October 21, 2019, https://www.ancient.eu/article/1456/history-of-halloween.
14. Miranda Green, *The Celtic World* (London: Routledge, 2012), 434.
15. Kenneth Jackson, *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 161.
16. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 15.
17. Thomas George Powell, *The Celts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1958; Norwich: Jarrold and Sons Ltd., 1960), 118.
18. Kevin Danaher, *The Year in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1972), 206.
19. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 14.
20. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 23.
21. Bannatyne, *Halloween,* 4.
22. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 21–22.
23. Markale, 21.
24. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 14.
25. Morton, 14.
26. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 22.
27. Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 12.
28. "Dr Jenny Butler Interview: The Festival of Samhain and Halloween," YouTube video post, 19:16, Posted by "Jenny Butler," November 2, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzRcvlaufQ.
29. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 22.
30. Markale, 31–41.
31. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 15.
32. Ruth Edna Kelly, *The Book of Hallowe'en* (Loki's Publishing, [1919]), 9.
33. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 4.
34. Bannatyne, 4.
35. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 9.
36. Markale, 89.
37. Philip Freeman, *The Philosopher and the Druids* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 162.
38. Miranda Green, *Caesar's Druids: An Ancient Priesthood* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 169.
39. W.J. Bethancourt III, "Halloween: Myths, Monsters and Devils," *Family Christmas Online*, 1994, last updated October 7, 2001,

https://familychristmasonline.com/other_holidays/halloween/sources/History%20of%20Halloween%20%20%20Myths,%20Monsters%20and%20Devils.htm.
40. Freeman, *The Philosopher and the Druids*, 162.
41. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 89.
42. Cornish, *The Celtic Tradition*, 103.
43. Cornish, 19.
44. Cornish, 104.
45. Cornish, 19.
46. Mark, "History of Halloween."
47. Santino, "Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs and Performances," 6.
48. Santino, 5.
49. Mark, "History of Halloween."
50. Mark.
51. Bannatyne, *Halloween,* 4.
52. "The Halloween History You Don't Know with Prof. Wendy Fonarow."
53. Mark, "History of Halloween."
54. "The Halloween History You Don't Know with Prof. Wendy Fonarow," YouTube video, 30:03, Posted by "TheLipTV," October 28, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzRcvlaufQ.
55. Powell, *The Celts*, 117.
56. David Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002), 20.
57. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 2.
58. Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday*, 17.
59. Santino, "Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs and Performances," 4–5.
60. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 2, 4.
61. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 16.

3. HOLLOWTIDE AND GUY FAWKES DAY

1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* s.v. "All Saints' Day," July 20, 1998, last updated May 17, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/All-Saints-Day.
2. The Martyrdom of Polycarp letter "is the oldest authentic account of an early Christian martyr's death," according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica.* "Establishing the exact date of the death of Polycarp is difficult and has been the subject of much debate among scholars. The date suggested by the letter itself is 155; but the

date given by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (d. *c.* 340), in his *Ecclesiastical History* is 167–168." (*Encyclopedia Britannica,* s.v. "Martyrdom of Polycarp," July 20, 1998, last updated February 1, 2007, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Martyrdom-of-Polycarp.)

3. "Who Was Polycarp?," *Got Questions*, n.d., accessed November 27, 2019, https://www.gotquestions.org/Polycarp.html.
4. Peter Kirby, "Martyrdom of Polycarp," *Early Christian Writings,* n.d., accessed November 25, 2019, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/martyrdompolycarp.html .
5. Various, *The Apostolic Fathers,* Ed. Anthony UYI (Ontario: Devoted Publishing, 2018) 46. Originally *Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Vol I, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus,* Ed. Philip Schaff (Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, n.d.).
6. Angie Mosteller, *Christian Origins of Halloween*, Pamphlet (Peabody: Rose Publishing, 2012), 2.
7. William Saunders, "What Are the Origins of All Saints Day and All Souls Day? Are These Linked with Paganism and Halloween?," *Catholic Straight Answers*, n.d., accessed January 3, 2020, http://catholicstraightanswers.com/what-are-the-origins-of-all-saints-day-and-all-souls-day-are-these-linked-with-paganism-and-halloween.
8. Lesley Bannatyne, *Halloween: An American Holiday, an American History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 9.
9. "Gregory I, Letter to Abbot Millitus," *Internet History Sourcebooks Project,* n.d. [1215], accessed November 5, 2019, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/greg1-mellitus.txt.
10. John the Deacon, *Monumenta Germaniae Historia,* n.a. (1848), quoted in William MacDonald, *The Pantheon: Design, Meaning, and Progeny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 139.
11. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Saint Ephraem Syrus," July 20, 1998, last updated June 5, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Ephraem-Syrus.
12. *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* s.v. "All Saints' Day."
13. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 17.
14. *Encyclopedia Britannica,* s.v., "All Saints' Day."
15. "Pantheon and All Saints," *Unam Sanctam Catholicam,* n.d., accessed November 5, 2019, http://www.unamsanctamcatholicam.com/component/content/article/79-history/606-pantheon-all-saints.html.
16. Mosteller, *Christian Origins of Halloween*, 2.

17. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 18.
18. *Encyclopedia Britannica,* s.v., "All Saints' Day," accessed June 29, 2021.
19. Kim Wier and Pam McCune, *Redeeming Halloween: Celebrating without Selling Out* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 15.
20. Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 22.
21. Ronald Hutton, "Halloween? It's More Thank Trick or Treat," Opinion, *Guardian*, October 28, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/28/halloween-more-than-trick-or-treat-origins.
22. Tom Sjöblom, "The Irish Origins of Purgatory," *Studia Celtica Fennica*, no. 2 (2005): 152–165. https://journal.fi/scf/article/view/7413/5765.
23. Jean Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween: Celebrating the Dark Half of the Year* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2001), 95.
24. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 93.
25. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 11.
26. *Defender Bible: Limited Edition, King James Version with Expanded Apocrypha* (Crane: Defender Publishing, 2018), 2 Maccabees 12:42–45, 492–493.
27. Alban Butler and Sarah Fawcett Thomas, *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, Vol. XI, Revised ed., Ed. Sarah Fawcett Thomas, David Farmer and Paul Burns, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 11.
28. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 91–92.
29. Markale, 92–93.
30. Markale, 92.
31. Butler, *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, 11.
32. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 11.
33. Bannatyne, 12.
34. Walter Krämer and Götz Trenkler, "Luther," *Lexicon van Hardnekkige Misverstanden* (Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1997), 214, 216.
35. Gerhard Ritter, *Luther* (Frankfurt, 1985).
36. Gerhard Prause, "Luthers Thesanschlag ist eine Legende," *Niemand hat Kolumbus ausgelacht* (Düsseldorf, 1986).
37. Peter Marshall, *1517: Martin Luther and the Invention of the Reformation*, (Oxford University Press, 2017).
38. *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Martin Luther," last updated November 24, 2019, 6:47 p.m., UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther.
39. Edward Peters, *A Modern Guide to Indulgences: Rediscovering This Often Misinterpreted Teaching* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2008), 13.

40. *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* s.v. "Indulgences," accessed November 5, 2019, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P4G.HTM.
41. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Johann Tetzel," accessed November 5, 2019, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14539a.htm.
42. Martin Luther, "A Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," Theses 35, 3, *Presbyterians of the Past*, [September 2017] October 31, 1517, Ed. Barry Waugh, https://www.presbyteriansofthepast.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/My-PDF-95-Theses-Martin-Luther-9-25-2017.pdf.
43. Martin Luther, "A Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," Theses 39, 4.
44. Mosteller, *Christian Origins of Halloween*, 8.
45. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 14.
46. Serhan, "The Misunderstood Legacy of Guy Fawkes."
47. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 15.
48. "An Act for a Public Thanksgiving to Almighty God Every Year on the Fifth Day of November."
49. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 24.

4. A HOLIDAY OF DIVINATION

1. Jean Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween: Celebrating the Dark Half of the Year* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2001), 25.
2. Markale, 28.
3. Terri Windling, "The Sacred Pig," *Myth and Moor Blog*, February 5, 2016, https://www.terriwindling.com/blog/2016/02/sacred-pig.html.
4. Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween*, 28–29.
5. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 16.
6. Jenny Butler, "Interview with Jenny Butler: The Celtic Folklore Traditions of Halloween," by Emmett McIntyre, *Transceltic*, October 26, 2016, 7:15 p.m., originally published October 2013, https://www.transceltic.com/pan-celtic/interview-dr-jenny-butler-celtic-folklore-traditions-of-halloween.
7. Jack Santino, "Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs and Performances," *Western Folklore* 42, no. 1 (2008): 6, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1499461.
8. Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 20.

9. Lesley Bannatyne, *Halloween: An American Holiday, an American History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 2.
10. Philip Freeman, *The Philosopher and the Druids,* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 158–159.
11. Nicole Evelina, "I Is for Insight: Celtic Divination," *Nicole Evelina Blog*, June 21, 2012, https://nicoleevelina.com/2012/06/21/i-is-for-insight-celtic-divination.
12. James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Cosimo, 2005), 635.
13. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 50.
14. Morton, 50.
15. Morton, 37.
16. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 71.
17. Bannatyne, 23.
18. Robert Burns, "Halloween," *Burns Country,* 1785, accessed January 7, 2020, http://www.robertburns.org/works/74.shtml.
19. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 73.
20. Bannatyne, 72.
21. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 37.
22. Morton, 38.
23. Bannatyne, *Halloween,* 56.
24. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 54.
25. Moron, 55.
26. Bannatyne, *Halloween,* 105.
27. Bannatyne, 119.
28. Bannatyne, 119–120.

5. ORIGINS OF TRICK OR TREAT

1. Jean Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween: Celebrating the Dark Half of the Year* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2001), 92–93.
2. Lesley Bannatyne, *Halloween: An American Holiday, an American History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 9.
3. John Aubrey, *Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, 1686–87, Ed. James Britten (London: The Folklore Society, 1880), 23.
4. Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 29.
5. "Although every modern chronicle of the holiday repeats the claim that vegetable lanterns were a time-honored component of Halloween celebrations in the British Isles, none gives any primary documentation. … The French historian Jean Markale maintains that Irish Catholics took Halloween legends more

literally than the Presbyterian Scots, who were 'too puritanical to take seriously the actual presence of ancestors or relatives on the evening of Halloween' and instead popularized the jack-o'-lantern as a fanciful representation of a wandering soul." [David Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002), 32.]

6. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 9.
7. Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 375.
8. Rogers, *Halloween*, 30.
9. Marian McNeill, *Hallowe'en: Its Origins, Rites and Ceremonies in the Scottish Tradition* (Edinburgh: Albyn Press, 1970), 30–31.
10. John Stow, *A Survay of London Written in the Year 1598,* Ed. Henry Morley (London: Routledge, 1890), 123.
11. Stubbs, Philip. *The Anatomy of Abuses in Ailgna*. London: Routledge, [1583] 1890. Also cited in Joseph Strutt, *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England*, Vol. II, Ed. J.R. Planche (London: Taband Press, [1842] 1970), 200–201. See also Rogers, "Halloween in Urban North America: Liminality and Hypperreality," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 29, no. 58 (1996): 464–465.
12. Rogers, *Halloween*, 25.
13. Kitty Fields, "A Brief History of Mummers and Guising," *Hub Pages*, May 19, 2015, https://discover.hubpages.com/education/The-History-of-Mummers.
14. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 9.
15. Rogers, *Halloween*, 30.
16. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 25.
17. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 26.
18. Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, 3rd ed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 276.
19. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 15.
20. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 26.
21. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 15.
22. Bannatyne, 16.
23. Bannatyne, 21.
24. Morton, *Trick or Treat,* 27.
25. Rogers, *Halloween*, 49.
26. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 52–53.
27. Bannatyne, 53, 56.
28. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 64.
29. Rogers, *Halloween*, 50.

30. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 67.
31. Bannatyne, 107.
32. Bannatyne, 105.
33. Rebecca Williams, "Weird Old Figures and a New Twist: Cultural Functions of Halloween at the Turn of the 20th Century," 6, Thesis submitted to faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, May 2, 2017, https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/78010/Williams_RJ_T_2017.pdf.
34. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 104.
35. Bannatyne, 108.
36. Mimi Matthews, "A Victorian Halloween Party," Mimimatthews.com, October 18, 2015, https://www.mimimatthews.com/2015/10/18/a-victorian-halloween-party.
37. *New York Times*, November 1, 1976, quoted in Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53–54.
38. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 105.
39. Bannatyne, 108.
40. Bannatyne, 119.
41. Bannatyne, 119.
42. Bannatyne, 120.
43. David Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002), 33.
44. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 73.
45. Albert Hall, *The Boy Craftsman: Practical and Profitable Ideas for a Boy's Leisure Hours* (Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company, 1905), 281–282.
46. Lesley Bannatyne, "When Halloween Was All Tricks and No Treats," *Smithsonian Magazine,* October 27, 2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-halloween-was-all-tricks-no-treats-180966996.
47. Bannatyne.
48. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 75–76.
49. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 121.
50. Bannatyne, 126.
51. Bannatyne, 126.
52. Bannatyne, 133.
53. Bannatyne, 129.
54. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 76–77, 133.
55. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 135.
56. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 77–78.
57. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 135.

58. Diana Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving: An American Holiday, An American History (*New York: Facts on File Publications, 1984), 186, quoted in David Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002), 46.
59. Penny Colman, *Thanksgiving: The True Story,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008), 101.
60. Colman, *Thanksgiving,* 102.
61. Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday,* 46.
62. Betty Smith, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, (New York: HarperPerennial, [1943] 1992), 170–171.
63. Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday,* 45.
64. Skal, 52–53.
65. Doris Moss, "A Victim of the Window-Soaping Brigade?" *American Home*, November 1939, quoted in David Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002), 53.
66. Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday*, 53.
67. "'Trick or Treat' Is Demand," *Herald,* November 4, 1927, quoted in Vanessa Marquez, "A Brief History of Trick-or-Treating," *A Shroud of Thoughts Blog*, October 29, 2016, http://mercurie.blogspot.com/2016/10/a-brief-history-of-trick-or-treating.html.
68. June Provines, "Front Views and Profiles," *Chicago Tribune*, November 3, 1934, quoted in Vanessa Marquez, "A Brief History of Trick-or-Treating."
69. "Halloween Pranks Keep Police on Hop," *The Halloween Catalog Collections: 55 Catalogs from the Golden Age of Halloween,* Ed. Ben Truwe (Medford: 2003), 79.
70. "Halloween Pranks Keep Police on Hop," *Oregon Journal,* November 1, 1934, quoted in Vanessa Marquez, "A Brief History of Trick-or-Treating."
71. "The Gangsters of Tomorrow," *Helena Independent*, November 2, 1934, quoted in Vanessa Marquez, "A Brief History of Trick-or-Treating."
72. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 142.
73. Bannatyne, 143.
74. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 112.

6. A COMMERCIAL HOLIDAY

1. "Social Media Influencing Near-Record Halloween Spending," *National Retail Federation*, September 25, 2019, https://nrf.com/media-

center/press-releases/social-media-influencing-near-record-halloween-spending.
2. ABC News, "Is Halloween the New Christmas?" *ABC News*, November 2007, 10:50 p.m., https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Business/story?id=2617781.
3. Cheryl Eddy, "The History of Modern Halloween, as Seen through Its Decorations," *Gizmodo*, October 26, 2016, 10:00 a.m., https://io9.gizmodo.com/the-history-of-modern-halloween-as-seen-through-its-de-1788207372.
4. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 80.
5. Lesley Bannatyne, *Halloween: An American Holiday, an American History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 96.
6. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 81–82.
7. Eddy, "The History of Modern Halloween, as Seen through Its Decorations."
8. Christopher Borrelli, "The Rise and Fall of Halloween Trick-or-Treating," Entertainment, *Chicago Tribune*, October 28, 2016, 3:05 p.m., https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/ct-no-more-trick-treat-ent-1031-20161028-column.html.
9. Brynn Holland, "How Donald Duck and Peanuts Saved Trick-or-Treating," *History*, October 10, 2017, last updated August 31, 2018, https://www.history.com/news/how-donald-duck-and-peanuts-saved-trick-or-treating.
10. Charles Schulz, "Peanuts," Comic Strip, *Fandom*, [October 29, 1951] n.d., accessed June 15, 2020, https://peanuts.fandom.com/wiki/October_1951_comic_strips.
11. Holland, "How Donald Duck and Peanuts Saved Trick-or-Treating."
12. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 83.
13. Talia Lakritz, "The Most Popular Halloween Costumes over the Past 150 Years—and the Fascinating History behind How Costume Trends Have Changed," *Insider,* October 2, 2019, 3:36 p.m., https://www.insider.com/halloween-costume-trends-history-2018-10.
14. Lakritz.
15. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 86.
16. "Kellogg's New Snack-Pack," Advertisement, *LIFE*, 37, no. 17 (1954): 79, https://books.google.com/books?id=0FIEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PP1&client=firefox-a&pg=PA79.
17. "Delicious Loot," Advertisement, *LIFE* 47, no. 17 (1959): 76, https://books.google.com/books?id=M1UEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PA5&client=firefox-a&pg=PA76.

18. "Kool-Aid," Advertisement, *LIFE* 47, no. 17 (1959): 114, https://books.google.com/books?id=M1UEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PA5&client=firefox-a&pg=PA114.
19. "Fleer's Dubble Bubble Gum," Advertisement, *LIFE,* October 26, 1953, https://books.google.com/books?id=poYEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PP1&client=firefox-a&pg=PA102.
20. Samira Kawash, "How Candy and Halloween Became Best Friends," Health. *Atlantic*, October 21, 2010, https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2010/10/how-candy-and-halloween-became-best-friends/64895.
21. Kawash, "How Candy and Halloween Became Best Friends."
22. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 149–150.
23. Katy Marshall, "The Original Holiday Pop-up: What Retailers Can Learn from Spirit Halloween," *Medallion Retail*, October 9, 2018, https://medallionretail.com/the-original-holiday-pop-up-what-retailers-can-learn-from-spirit-halloween.
24. Catherine Trevison, (Newhouse News Service), "Temporary Retailers Fight over Space as Holidays Approach," *Seattle Times*, October 22, 2000, http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=20001022&slug=4049449.
25. "About Spirit Halloween, History and Headquarters Information," *Corporate*, n.d., accessed December 2, 2019, https://corporateofficeheadquarters.org/spirit-halloween.
26. Ernie Smith, "The Halloween-Industrial Complex," *Medium*, October 20, 2017, https://medium.com/@shortformernie/pop-up-halloween-store-history-3159c6d5f574.
27. Gaby Valle, "Halloween Pop-up Stores, Explained," *Vox*, n.d., last updated October 29, 2018, 12:38 p.m., EDT, https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2018/10/25/18023130/spirit-halloween-party-city-pop-up-stores.
28. Patrick Clark and Polly Mosendz, "How Halloween Stores Conquered America," *Bloomberg*, October 27, 2016, https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2016-halloween-pop-up-shops.
29. Valle, "Halloween Pop-up Stores, Explained."
30. Rosie Cima, "The Origins of Sexy Halloween, Inc.," *Priceonomics*, October 31, 2014, https://priceonomics.com/the-origins-of-sexy-halloween-inc.
31. Alice Hines, (AOL Daily Finance), "The Halloween Industry's Evolution to a $6 Billion Business," Business, *Huffington Post*, October 28, 2011, 3:49 p.m., ET, last updated December 28, 2011,

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-halloween-industrys-evolution-to-a-6-billion-industry_n_1064334.
32. Cima, "The Origins of Sexy Halloween, Inc."
33. Hines, "The Halloween Industry's Evolution to a $6 Billion Business."
34. Lesley Bannatyne, "Halloween. A History," Revised and updated, *I Skull Halloween*, n.d., accessed December 2, 2019, https://www.iskullhalloween.com/historyarticle.html.
35. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 150.
36. Bannatyne, 150.
37. Cima, "The Origins of Sexy Halloween, Inc."
38. Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 132.
39. Meredith May, "SAN FRANCISCO / Halloween Started as a Kids' Costume Contest. Then ... / FLEEING THE FUN: Many Castro Residents Who Once Relished Halloween Now Avoid It," *San Francisco Gate*, November 3, 2006, 4:00 a.m., PST, https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/SAN-FRANCISCO-Halloween-started-as-a-kids-2484693.php.
40. Paul Hobbs and Even Jones, "74: The Queer History of Halloween," *Your Queer Story,* Podcast audio, October 30, 2019, https://yourqueerstory.com/podcast/the-queer-history-of-halloween.
41. May, "SAN FRANCISCO / Halloween Started as a Kids' Costume Contest. Then ... / FLEEING THE FUN: Many Castro Residents Who Once Relished Halloween Now Avoid It."
42. Hobbs, "74: The Queer History of Halloween."
43. Hobbs.
44. *Village Voice*, November 4, 1971.
45. Rogers, *Halloween*, 134.
46. Bryan Van Gorder, "The Queer History (and Present) of NYC's Village Halloween Parade," Travel, *NewNowNext*, October, 22, 2018, http://www.newnownext.com/the-queer-history-and-present-of-nycs-village-halloween-parade/10/2018.
47. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 94.
48. David Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002), 125.
49. Van Gorder, "The Queer History (and Present) of NYC's Village Halloween Parade."
50. Rogers, *Halloween*, 134–135, 137.
51. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 94.
52. Rogers, *Halloween*, 126.
53. Rogers, 134.
54. Cima, "The Origins of Sexy Halloween, Inc."

55. Van Gorder, "The Queer History (and Present) of NYC's Village Halloween Parade."
56. "Halloween Has Long Been Our Big Gay Holiday," *Baltimore Out Loud*, November 9, 201, http://baltimoreoutloud.com/wp/halloween-has-long-been-our-big-gay-holiday.
57. Rogers, *Halloween*, 132.
58. Erik Brooks, "When Coors Light Used a Werewolf to Win Halloween," *Beer and Beyond*, October 30, 2015, https://www.molsoncoorsblog.com/features/when-coors-light-used-werewolf-win-halloween.
59. Chief Marketer Staff, "Trick or Drink?" October 1, 2003, https://www.chiefmarketer.com/trick-or-drink.
60. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 98.
61. Bruce Horovitz, "Elvira's Made Millions off Halloween," Business. *USA Today*, October 24, 2012, 6:33 p.m., ET, last updated October 24, 2012, 7:36 p.m., ET, https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2012/10/24/elvira-mistress-of-the-dark-halloween-coors/1625069.
62. Frances Somers, ed. *Minneapolis Hallowe'en Fun Book,* Revised ed., Ed. Frances Somers (Minneapolis: 1937), 100.
63. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 101.
64. Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday*, 103.
65. Skal, 103.
66.Rogers, *Halloween*, 104.
67. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 102.
68. Chris Heller, "A Brief History of the Haunted House," *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 28, 2015, last updated October 31, 2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/history-haunted-house-180957008.
69. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 102.
70. Morton, 102.
71. Brooke Sassman, "I Survived One of the Scariest Halloween Mazes in America. Here's What Happened," Travel, *Today*, October 28, 2016, 6:26 p.m., EDT, https://www.today.com/money/i-survived-one-scariest-halloween-mazes-us-knott-s-scary-t104302.
72. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 103.
73. Morton, 104.
74. Rogers, *Halloween*, 105.
75. Larry Kirchner, "12 Things That Shaped Our Industry," *Hauntworld Magazine*, n.d., accessed December 2, 2019, https://www.hauntworld.com/haunted-house-magazine/history-of-the-haunted-house-industry.

76. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 104–105.
77. "Do You Plan to Celebrate Halloween or Participate in Halloween Activities This Year?" *Statista* survey, 2021, accessed July 9, 2021, https://www.statista.com/statistics/243201/planned-halloween-participation-in-the-united-states.
78. Linus Owen, "Why Has Halloween Become So Popular among Adults?" *Conversation*, October 26, 2018, 5:30 p.m., EDT. https://theconversation.com/why-has-halloween-become-so-popular-among-adults-104896.
79. Owen, "Why Has Halloween Become So Popular among Adults?"
80. Allison Zeller, "The Evolution of Halloween: 3 Trends to Watch," Halloween, *National Retail Federation*, October 5, 2016, https://nrf.com/blog/evolution-halloween-3-trends-watch.
81. Rachel Paley, "How Halloween Became One of the Biggest Drinking Holidays of the Year," *VinePair*, October 27, 2017, https://vinepair.com/articles/halloween-drinking-holiday.

7. A NIGHT OF HORRORS

1. Cori Brosnahan, "The History of American Fear," American Experience, PBS, October 28, 2016, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/history-american-fear.
2. Cindy Clark, "Tricks of Festival: Children, Enculturation, and American Halloween," *Ethos*, 33, no. 2 (2005): 191–192.
3. Cori Brosnahan, "The History of American Fear."
4. Cori Brosnahan.
5. Cori Brosnahan.
6. Cori Brosnahan.
7. Greg Daugherty, "Why Monsters Were Huge on TV in the '60s," *Next Avenue*, September 18, 2014, https://www.nextavenue.org/why-monsters-were-huge-tv-60s.
8. "Universal Monsters," Universal Monsters Wiki, *Fandom*, n.d. accessed June 10, 2020, https://universalmonsters.fandom.com/wiki/Universal_Monsters.
9. Noel Murray and Keith Phipps, "A Guide to the Universal Studios Monster Movies, 1923–1955," *A.V. Club*, October 25, 2012, 11:00 a.m., https://film.avclub.com/a-guide-to-the-universal-studios-monster-movies-1923-1-1798234514.
10. Terence Canote, "Shock!: How Television Revived the Universal Monsters," *A Shroud of Thoughts*, October 27, 2015,

http://mercurie.blogspot.com/2015/10/shock-how-television-revived-universal.html.

11. Canote.
12. Canote.
13. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 90.
14. "About Us," *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, n.d., accessed June 10, 2020, https://www.famousmonsters.com/about-us.
15. Larry Holzwarth, "The Story of the Universal Classic Monsters," *History Collection*, n.d., accessed June 10, 2020, https://historycollection.co/the-story-of-the-universal-classic-monsters.
16. Terence Canote, "Shock!: How Television Revived the Universal Monsters."
17. Montague Summers, *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin* (London: K. Paul Trench, Trubner, 1928, reprint, Monee: n.a., 2020), 7, 9.
18. David Skal, *Romancing the Vampire* (Atlanta: Witman Publishing, 2009), 12.
19. John Scoffern, *Stray Leaves of Science and Folk-Lore* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1870), 350.
20. Heather Pringle, "Archaeologist Suspect Vampire Burial; An Undead Primer," News, *National Geographic*, July 15, 2013, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/7/130715-vampire-archaeology-burial-exorcism-anthropology-grave.
21. Becky Little, "The Bloody Truth about Vampires," News, *National Geographic*, October 26, 2016, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2016/10/vampires-europe-new-england-halloween-history/#close.
22. Skal, *Romancing the Vampire*, 15.
23. Mark Jenkins, *Vampire Forensics: Uncovering the Origins of an Enduring Legend (*Washington DC: National Geographic Society, 2010), 15–18, 125–129.
24. Jenkins, 15.
25. Becky Little, "The Bloody Truth about Vampires."
26. Stephen Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," *Victorian Studies,* 33:4 (1990), 622, quoted in Jan Hurta, "The Vampire as a Metaphor for Social Desires, Anxieties and Problems in Fin-de-Siècle and the 21st Century. Comparing Bram Stoker's 'Dracula' and Alan Ball's 'True Blood,'" Term Paper (*University of Bamberg,* 2017), 2, https://www.grin.com/document/444919.

27. Monika Tomaszewska, "Vampirism and the Degeneration of the Imperial Race: Stoker's Dracula as the Invasive Degenerate Other," *Journal of Dracula Studies* 6 (2004): 3.
28. Jan Hurta, "The Vampire as a Metaphor for Social Desires, Anxieties and Problems in Fin-de-Siècle and the 21st Century. Comparing Bram Stoker's 'Dracula' and Alan Ball's 'True Blood,'" Term Paper (*University of Bamberg,* 2017), 2, https://www.grin.com/document/444919.
29. David Skal, *V Is for Vampire: The A–Z Guide to Everything Undead* (New York: Plume/Penguin Books, 1996), 156.
30. Skal, *Romancing the Vampire*, 48–49.
31. Summers, *The Vampire,* 51.
32. Summers, 53.
33. Skal, *Romancing the Vampire*, 107.
34. Motague Summers, *The Werewolf* (London: Kegan Paul, Trubner and Company, 1933, reprint, Mansfield: Martino Publishing, 2012), 2.
35. Summers, *The Werewolf*, 15.
36. Skal, *Romancing the Vampire*, 20.
37. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, Ed. Felix Liebrecht (Hanover, 1856), 4, quoted in Montague Summers, *The Werewolf*, 16.
38. *Werewolves, Witches and Wandering Spirits: Traditional Beliefs and Folklore in Early Modern Europe,* Ed. Kathryn Edwards (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2002), 4, quoted in Linda Godfrey, *Mysteries, Legends, and Unexplained Phenomena* (New York: Chelsea House), 38.
39. Sabine Baring-Gould, *The Book of Werewolves*, (Monee, [1865] 2020), 71.
40. George Frederick Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore,* Cambridge, 1903.
41. Arthur and Albert Schott, *Walachische Märchen* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1845).
42. Henry Fanshawe Tozer, *Researches in the Highlands of Turkey,* Vol. II (London, 1869), 80–98.
43. Ernst Marno, *Reisen im Gebeite des blauen und weiseen Nil* (Vienna, 1874), 239.
44. *Life and Edventures of Nathaniel Pearce,* Vol. I, Ed. J. J. Halls (1831), 288.
45. Mansfield Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia* (1868), 300–301, 310–312.
46. P. B. Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa* (1861).
47. D. and C. Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zamesi and its Tributaries* (1865), 159.
48. Theophilus Waldmeier, *Autobiography* (1886).
49. Basset, *Les Apocryphes Ethiopiens* (1894), iv, 24.
50. Mary H. Kingsland, *Travels in West Africa* (1897), 536–539.

51. T. J. Allridge, *The Sherbro and the Hinterland* (1901).
52. H. J. Beatty, *Human Leopards* (1915).
53. M. de Lembray, *The Werewolf of the Africans*.
54. John Cameron Grant, *The Ethiopian,* "A Narrative of the Society of Human Leopards" (Paris, 1900).
55. G. A. Wilken, *De Indische Gids* (1884), 945–950.
56. W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (1896), 354–355.
57. W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (1900).
58. W. W. Skeat, *Fables and Folklore from an Eastern Front*, (1901), 26.
59. Bezemer, *Volksdichtung aus Indonesien* (1904), 363–365, 422–423.
60. Bompas, *Folkore of the Santal Parganas*, 229, 256.
61. Herbert Giles. *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, 2nd ed. Vol. I. ([1880] 1909).
62. P'u Sung-ling, *Liao chai chih i.*
63. Captain F. Brinkley, *Japan*, Vol. V, Oriental Series (Tokyo, 1902), 197.
64. J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1907).
65. M. W. de Visser, "The Fox and the Badger in Japanese Folklore," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society in Japan* (1908), xxxvi part 3.
66. E. T. C. Werner, *Myths and Legends of China* (1922).
67. G. Willoughby-Meade, *Chinese Ghouls and Goblins* (London, 1928), 102–138.
68. A. C. Krujt. "De werewolf bij de Toradja's van Midden-Celebes." *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde* (1899), 548–551, 557–560.
69. M. G. Lewis, *Journal of a West India Proprietor* (1834), 295.
70. Henry Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States*, (Philadelphia, 1853–6), 683.
71. Joseph de Acosta. *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*. Libro septimo, cap. 19 (Sevilla, 1590), 499–501. English translation by Edward Grimston (Hakluyt Society reprint, Vol. II, 1880), 497–499.
72. Eusébe Salverte, *Des Sciences Occultes*, 3rd ed. (1856), 215–217. English translation, *Occult Sciences*, 2 vols (1846).
73. Von Joh. Bapt. von spix und Carl. Fredr. Phil. Von Martius. Müchen, *Reise in Brasilien*, 3 vols. (1823–1831). English translation, Travels in Brazil, Vol. II (1824), 243.
74. Granada, *Reseña Histórico-descriptiva de Supersticiones del Rio de la Plata* (1896), 581–627.
75. Ambrosetti, *La Leyenda del Yaguareté-Abá* (Buenos Aires, 1896).
76. *Globus, Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* (1896), 272–273.

77. T. C. Bridges, "Witchcraft To-day," *Occult Review*, 45, no. 5 (1927): 330.
78. Summers, *The Werewolf*, 21.
79. Summer, 22.
80. Benjamin Radford, "Werewolves: Lore, Legend & Lycanthropy," *Live Science*, October 30, 2012, https://www.livescience.com/24412-werewolves.html.
81. Baring-Gould, *The Book of Werewolves,* 62–70.
82. Summers, *The Werewolf*, 119–122.
83. Baring-Gould, *The Book of Werewolves*, 13.
84. Summers, *The Werewolf*, 123.
85. Laura Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 118.
86. Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Translation by Montague Summers (New York: Cosimo Classics, [1487] 2007), 45.
87. Morgan Stringer, "A War on Women? The *Malleus Maleficarum* and the Witch-Hunts in Early Modern Europe," Thesis Paper, Barksdale Honors College (University of Mississippi), May 2015, 14–15, 30.
88. Claude Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead*, e-book (Inner Traditions – Bear & Company, 2011) "The Good Women Who Roam the Night."
89. Lecouteux.
90. Alastair Sooke, "Where Do Witches Come From?" State of the Art, *BBC*, October 10, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20140925-where-do-witches-come-from.
91. Mike Mariani, "The Tragic, Forgotten History of Zombies," Culture, *Atlantic*, October 28, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/10/how-america-erased-the-tragic-history-of-the-zombie/412264.
92. "Haiti and the Truth about Zombies," University of Michigan, n.d., accessed June 29, 2020, http://www.umich.edu/~uncanny/zombies.html.
93. Geller, "Revenant," *Mythology.net*, July 7, 2018, https://mythology.net/mythical-creatures/revenant.
94. Geller.
95. Lisa Morton, *Ghosts: A Haunted Story* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015), 12.
96. Morton, 101.
97. Morton, 110.

98. Jan J. M. de Groot, "Buddhist Masses for the Dead at Amoy," *Actes du sixième congrès international des orientalistes* (Leiden, 1885), 20–21, quoted in Lisa Morton, *Ghosts,* 101.
99. Morton, 46–47.
100. Morton, 58.
101. Morton, 171.
102. Geller, "Revenant."

8. AN EVEN DARKER HERITAGE

1. Michael Heiser, *Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015), 104–107.
2. *Book of Enoch*, Translation by R. H. Charles, D. Litt. and D. D. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917, reprint, Crane: Defender Publishing 2016.), 7:3–5, 5.
3. *Book of Enoch*, 15:8–11, 12–13.
4. Reginald Campbell Thompson, *The Devils and Spirits of Babylonia: Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits, Which Attack Mankind*, Vol. I, (London: Luzac and Company, 1903), 71.
5. Reginald Campbell Thompson, *Semitic Magic, Its Origins and Development* (London: Luzac and Company, 1908), 47–52.
6. Pliny Earl Goddard, *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XXIV, (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1920), 430–431.
7. David Jones, *Sanapia: Comanche Medicine Woman* (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 1984), 50–51.
8. Edward Curtis, *The North American Indian: The Indians of Oklahoma*, Vol. XIX (Edward S. Curtis, 1930), 189–190.
9. Homer, *The Odyssey*, Translation by Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux), Book IX, 145–162.
10. Eduard Seler, "The Bat God of the Maya Race," *Mexican and Central American Antiquities, Calendar Systems, and History* (Washington D.C.: Bureau of Ethnology, 1904), 234, 240.
11. Burton, *Interview with the Giant*, 27.
12. Frank Humphrey, "The Great Flood and Halloween – A Christian Response to Halloween," October 27, 1997, Posted on October 31, 2003, 8:15 p.m., https://freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/1012521/posts.

13. Frederick Filby, *The Flood Reconsidered: A Review of the Evidences of Geology, Archaeology, Ancient Literature and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 106.
14. "This awful disaster left an indelible impression upon the minds of men before they were scattered abroad, and whether we go to ancient Babylon, to the Sumerians or to the Chaldeans, to the Chinese or to the American Indians, to the natives of the Pacific Islands or to the ancient inhabitants of India, everywhere is found some trace of a Flood tradition and a memory of a fearful catastrophe which destroyed mankind and left but one or a few survivors. ... the essential facts of this great catastrophe are easily discernible. There is almost complete agreement among them all on the three main features: 1. There is a universal destruction of the human race and all other living things by water. 2. An ark, or boat, is provided as the means of escape. 3. A seed of mankind is preserved to perpetuate the human race. To these might be added a fourth, which, though not occurring in all the traditions, occurs very frequently, namely, that the wickedness of man is given as the cause of the Flood." [Alfred Rehwinkle, *The Flood in the Light of the Bible, Geology, and Archaeology,* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 128]
15. In the introduction to his book *Die Sintflut in Sage and Wissenschaft,* Johannes Riem writes, "'Among all traditions there is none so general, so widespread on earth, and so apt to show what may develop from the same material according to the varying spiritual character of a people as the Flood tradition. Lengthy and thorough discussions with Dr. Kunike have convinced me of the evident correctness of his position that the fact of the Deluge is granted because at the basis of all myths, particularly nature myths, there is a real fact, but that during a subsequent period the material was given its present mythical character and form." [Alfred Rehwinkle, *The Flood in the Light of the Bible, Geology, and Archaeology,* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 129]
16. "Hugh Miller, the famous Scottish geologist of the last century, also enumerates a great number of Flood traditions and expresses the following opinion concerning them: 'There is, however, one special tradition which seems to be more deeply impressed and more widely spread than any of the others. The destruction of well-nigh the whole human race, in an early age of the world's history, by a great deluge, appears to have so impressed the minds of the few survivors, and seems to have been handed down to their children, in consequence, with such terror-struck

impressiveness that their remote descendants of the present day have not even yet forgotten it. It appears in almost every mythology, and lives in the most distant countries, and among the most barbarous tribes.'" [Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of Rocks,* 290, quoted in Alfred Rehwinkle, *The Flood in the Light of the Bible, Geology, and Archaeology,* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 130]

17. Filby, 106–108.
18. Edward Davies, *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids Ascertained by National Documents; and Compared with the General Traditions and Customs of Heathenism, as Illustrated by Antiquaries of Our Age. With an Appendix, Containing Ancient Poems and Extracts, with Some Remarks on Ancient British Coins* (London, 1809), 517, quoted in George Stanley Faber, *Horae Mosaicae; or, A Dissertation on the Credibility and Theology of the Pentateuch. Comprehending the Substance of Eight Lectures Read before the University of Oxford, in the Year 1801, Pursuant to the Will of the Late Rev. John Bampton, A.M.*, 2nd ed., Vol. I (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1818), 130, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsoai&AN=edsoai.ocn645158512&site=eds-live.
19. David Wilson, *A Guide to Good Reasoning* (New York: McGraw-Hill College, 1999), 206.
20. Blane Bachelor, "The Twisted Transatlantic Tale of American Jack-o'-lanterns," Travel, *National Geographic*, October 27, 2010, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/the-twisted-transatlantic-tale-of-american-jack-o-lanterns.
21. Bachelor.
22. Ben Johnson, "The Anglo-Saxon English Days of the Week," *Historic UK*, n.d., accessed July 24, 2020, https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Days-Of-The-Week.
23. April Holloway, "Pagan Gods and the Naming of the Days," *Ancient Origins*, n.d., last updated November 17, 2013, https://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends/pagan-gods-and-naming-days-001037.

9. REDEEMING MONSTERS

1. Brian Godawa, "An Apologetic of Horror," *Christian Research Institute,* 32, no. 5 (2009), https://www.equip.org/article/an-apologetic-of-horror.

10. JUDGING THE MATTER

1. Alessandra Malito, "A Lot of Really Bad Things Are More Likely to Happen on Halloween," *Market Watch*, October 31, 2018, 4:41 p.m., ET, https://www.marketwatch.com/story/halloween-isnt-just-scary-its-dangerous-2018-10-30.
2. Steve Neavling, "Decades-Long Devil's Night Is Dead in Detroit, with Fires Disappearing on Halloween Eve," Local News, *Detroit Metro Times*, October 31, 2019, https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/decades-long-devils-night-is-dead-in-detroit-fires-disappear-on-halloween-eve/Content?oid=23012915.
3. James Dickson, "'Angels' Night' Name to End in Detroit," News, *Detroit News*, November 1, 2017, 9:17 a.m., ET, last updated November 1, 2017, 3:13 p.m., ET, https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2017/11/01/angels-night-detroit-ending/820484001.
4. Associated Press, "Corpse Mistaken for Halloween Decoration," World, *NBC News*, October 27, 2005, 3:39 p.m., EDT, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna9841877.
5. Rebecca Cathcart, "Body Is Mistaken for a Halloween Display," *New York Times*, October 17, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/18/us/18body.html.
6. Associated Press, "Long Island Man Decapitated Mother, Then Killed Himself, Police Say," *New York Times*, October 29, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/30/nyregion/long-island-man-killed-mother-then-himself-police-say.html.
7. Paul Hobbs and Even Jones, "74: The Queer History of Halloween," *Your Queer Story,* Podcast audio, October 30, 2019, https://yourqueerstory.com/podcast/the-queer-history-of-halloween.
8. "Halloween Has Long Been Our Big Gay Holiday," *Baltimore Out Loud*, November 9, 2018, http://baltimoreoutloud.com/wp/halloween-has-long-been-our-big-gay-holiday.
9. Emma Ellis, "TikTok Witches Are Hexing the Election This Halloween," *Wired*, October 29, 2020, 3:34 p.m., https://www.wired.com/story/internet-witches-election.
10. Russell Goldman, "Real Witches Practice Samhain: Wicca on the Rise in U.S.," *ABC News*, October 30, 2009, https://abcnews.go.com/WN/real-witches-practice-samhain-wicca-rise-us/story?id=8957950.

11. SHOULD HALLOWEEN BE REDEEMED?

1. Kim Wier and Pam McCune, *Redeeming Halloween: Celebrating without Selling Out,* Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 40–42.
2. Wier, *Redeeming Halloween,* 125.

12. THE LIMITATIONS OF CHRISTIAN SUBVERSION

1. Luke Harrington, "No, Christmas Isn't Secretly Pagan: A Very Merry D-List Saints Christmas Special (For the Whole Family)," *Christ and Pop Culture*, December 22, 2017, https://christandpopculture.com/no-christmas-isnt-secretly-pagan-merry-d-list-saints-christmas-special-whole-family.
2. William Tighe, "Calculating Christmas," *Touchstone*, December 2003, http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=16-10-012-v#continue.
3. Tighe.
4. Mary Farrow, "Is Christmas Simply a Re-imagining of Ancient Pagan Celebrations?" News, *Catholic News Agency,* December 13, 2020, 4:58 a.m., https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/46889/is-christmas-simply-a-re-imagining-of-ancient-pagan-celebrations.
5. Farrow.
6. Michael Heiser, "Naked Bible 195: Is Christmas a Pagan Holiday?" *Naked Bible Podcast*, Podcast audio, December 25, 2017, https://nakedbiblepodcast.com/?s=christmas.
7. Aaron Gleason, "How Christmas Baptizes Norse Mythology into Powerful Christian Archetypes," *Federalist*, December 15, 2017, https://thefederalist.com/2017/12/15/christmas-baptizes-norse-mythology-powerful-christian-archetypes.
8. Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 29.
9. John Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism: A Contemporary Catechism of the Teachings of the Catholic Church (*New York: Doubleday, 1981), 277.
10. N. T. Wright, *For All the Saints? Remembering the Christian Departed* (Morehouse Publishing, 2003), 6.

APPENDIX A
SAMHAIN – THE RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL THAT NEVER WAS

1. Joseph Abrahamson, "Redeeming Holy Days from Pagan Lies: All Saints' Day/Eve and Samhain," *The Brothers of John the Steadfast*, October 30, 2014, https://steadfastlutherans.org/2014/10/redeeming-holy-days-from-pagan-lies-all-saints-dayeve-and-samhain.
2. Ronald Hutton, "Halloween? It's More Thank Trick or Treat," Opinion, *Guardian*, October 28, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/28/halloween-more-than-trick-or-treat-origins.
3. Lesley Bannatyne, *Halloween: An American Holiday, an American History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 2.
4. History.com Editors, "Samhain," *History*, April 6, 2018, last updated October 31, 2019, https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/samhain.
5. Abrahamson, "Redeeming Holy Days from Pagan Lies: All Saints' Day/Eve and Samhain."
6. Emmett McIntyre, "Interview with Dr. Jenny Butler: The Celtic Folklore Traditions of Halloween," *Transceltic*, October 26, 2016, 7:15 p.m, originally published October 2013, https://www.transceltic.com/pan-celtic/interview-dr-jenny-butler-celtic-folklore-traditions-of-halloween.
7. "Irish Etyma," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, 40, n.a. (n.d.): 245, quoted in Lisa Spangenberg, "What Is Samain or Samhain?," *Celtic Studies Resources*, n.d., accessed November 5, 2019. https://www.digitalmedievalist.com/opinionated-celtic-faqs/samain.
8. J. Vendryes, *Lexique Étymologique de l'Irlandais Ancien,* n.a. (n.d.), quoted in Lisa Spangenberg, "What Is Samain or Samhain?," *Celtic Studies Resources*, n.d., accessed November 5, 2019. https://www.digitalmedievalist.com/opinionated-celtic-faqs/samain.
9. John Rhys, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom,* 2nd ed (London: Williams and Norgate, 1892).
10. *New World Encyclopedia,* s.v. "Samhain," last updated August 31, 2019, 9:11 p.m., https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Samhain#cite_ref-17.
11. *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, Volume 1 A–Celti,* Ed. John Koch (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 332.

12. Jean Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween: Celebrating the Dark Half of the Year* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2001), 19–20.
13. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 14.
14. Jack Santino, "Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs and Performances," *Western Folklore* 42, no. 1 (2008): 4, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1499461.
15. W.J. Bethancourt III, "Halloween: Myths, Monsters and Devils," *Family Christmas Online*, 1994, last updated October 7, 2001, https://familychristmasonline.com/other_holidays/halloween/sources/History%20of%20Halloween%20%20%20Myths,%20Monsters%20and%20Devils.htm.
16. Jean Markale, *The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween: Celebrating the Dark Half of the Year* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2001), 48.
17. Markale, 48.
18. Markale, 50–51.
19. Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15.
20. Rogers, 14.
21. Bethancourt III, "Halloween: Myths, Monsters and Devils."
22. Rogers, *Halloween*, 18.
23. "Festivals and Fasts (Celtic)," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V, Davidians–Fichte, Ed. James Hastings and John Selbie, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 839.
24. Philip Freeman, *The Philosopher and the Druids,* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 159.
25. Daniel Binchy, "The Fair of Tailtu and the Feast of Tara," *Ériu* 18, n.a. (1958): 129–130.
26. Joseph Abrahamson, "Redeeming Holy Days from Pagan Lies: All Saints' Day/Eve and Samhain."
27. John Rhys, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom*, 2nd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1892), 514.
28. James Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris; Studies in the History of Oriental Religion,* 2nd ed. (London: MacMillan and Company, 1907), 301–318.
29. Abrahamson, "Redeeming Holy Days from Pagan Lies: All Saints' Day/Eve and Samhain."
30. Cormac Mac Cuillenán, *Sanas Cormaic,* Electronic ed, Ed. Whitley Stokes, n.d., accessed January 6, 2020. http://www.ucd.ie/tlh/text/ws.tig.001.text.html.
31. Abrahamson, "Redeeming Holy Days from Pagan Lies: All Saints' Day/Eve and Samhain."

32. *Heroic Romances of Ireland*, Vol. I, Ed. A. H. Leahy (London: David Nutt, 1905), 57.
33. *Wikipedia,* s.v. "List of Harvest Festivals," last updated November 4, 2019, 4:15 p.m., UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_harvest_festivals.

APPENDIX B
HISTORIC DIVINATION RITUALS

1. Lesley Bannatyne, *Halloween: An American Holiday, an American History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 75–76.
2. Bannatyne, 77.
3. Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 38.
4. Bannatyne, *Halloween,* 74–75.
5. Bannatyne, 77.
6. Bannatyne, 57.
7. Morton, *Trick or Treat*, 56.
8. Morton, 56.
9. Morton, 56.
10. Bannatyne, *Halloween*, 57.
11. Bannatyne, 57, 131.

APPENDIX C
SPIKE HALLOWEEN CANDY – AN URBAN LEGEND

1. Sylvia Grider, "The Razor Blades in the Apples Syndrome," *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend*, Ed. Paul Smith (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984).
2. David Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002), 3–4.
3. Joel Best and Gerald Horiuchi, "The Razor Blade in the Apple: The Social Construction of Urban Legends," *Social Problems* 32, no. 5 (1985): 492.
4. Jan Harold Brunvand, *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends,* Vol. I (Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 288.
5. "Halloween Safety: A National Survey of Parents' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors," *Safe Kids Worldwide*, Harris interactive poll, 2011, https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/ResearchReports/halloween-research-report.pdf.

6. Samira Kawash, *Candy: A Century of Panic and Pleasure* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2013), 272.
7. Judy Klemesrud, "Those Treats May Be Tricks," *New York Times*, October 28, 1970, TimesMachine, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1970/10/28/76790088.html?pageNumber=83.
8. Joel Best, "Halloween Sadism: The Evidence," JoelBest.net, n.d. accessed August 10, 2020, https://www.joelbest.net/halloween-sadism.
9. Reports came from the leading newspapers in the three largest metropolitan areas—*New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Chicago Tribune*—and from the *Fresno Bee*. At the time, Joel Best lived in Fresno California.
10. Best, "The Razor Blade in the Apple," 491.
11. Best, "Halloween Sadism: The Evidence."
12. "Candy Suspected in Death of Boy, 5," *New York Times*, November 7, 1970, TimesMachine, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1970/11/07/83674848.html?pageNumber=33.
13. "Boy, 5, Who Died of Heroin May Have Taken a Capsule," *New York Times,* November 10, 1970, TimesMachine, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1970/11/10/80496891.html?pageNumber=51.
14. Skal, *Death Makes a Holiday*, 7.
15. "Boy Killed by Cyanide Put in Halloween Candy," *New York Times*, November 2, 1974, TimesMachine, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1974/11/02/80231360.html?pageNumber=65.
16. "Wife Takes Stand at Husbands Trial in Son's Poisoning," *New York Times*, May 29, 1975, TimesMachine, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1975/05/29/80045599.html?pageNumber=46.
17. Aaron Carroll, "It's Halloween. Beware Urban Legends (and Cars)," *New York Times*, October 28, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/28/upshot/its-halloween-beware-urban-legends-and-cars.html.
18. Best, "The Razor Blade in the Apple," 497.

Also from Timothy Zebell

Culture of Lies: Understanding Fake News and Its Spiritual Ramifications

Nearly half of all Americans have a negative view of the news media. Only 44% say they can think of a news source that reports the news objectively, and 66% say news outlets do not do a good job of separating fact from opinion. Now we have a president who regularly calls mainstream news outlets "fake news." How did we get here? What is fake news? Who is truly to blame? Is the label fair? What are the spiritual ramifications of fake news? These questions and more are addressed in Culture of Lies.