

What is Halloween all about?

By

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Maybe you have grown up with celebrating Halloween every year and enjoy the fun and candy you get. Maybe you never used to know about Halloween and are really surprised by all the scary images and decorations that are showing up in stores nowadays. Is it something Christian, because it came from Europe and America? Or is it something evil because of all the ghosts and witches?

Halloween is an old practice

The answer is not so easy, because Halloween is an old practice and different ages, cultures and religious settings have added elements to it. The name 'Halloween' is linked to the Christian festival of 'All Hallows' or 'All saints', which is celebrated on the 1st of November. This is traditionally a day on which the church remembers with joy the lives of the saints and martyrs who have gone to heaven before us.

Praying for souls

However, many ideas and practices were added, both from pagan (pre-Christian) traditions and from non-Biblical ideas that entered the church. Such as praying for souls that were believed to be not yet in heaven or preparing offerings for the dead. Also, there was a believe that the spirits of the dead would roam the earth until All Saints day and that on Halloween they would take their last chance to have revenge on people they disliked. That is why people would dress up, so the spirits would not recognise them. Another (pagan) tradition is that people would play games trying to find out about their futures.

Entertainment

In recent decades, the entertainment industry has really taken over, adding decorations and customs that are really gruesome, and horror stories and movies have become part of the celebration. It has turned into a festival where things that normally are frightening and disgusting are used to make fun.

Every country has their own traditions, but a common thread is that it is a time when people think about death

and spiritual things. There are right and wrong ways to do that as Christians and that is where my next article is about: What to do for Halloween as a Christian?

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