

# Halloween: A Biblical Critique of James Jordan and American Vision

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“Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe” Jeremiah 10:2-3

The second most popular “holy” day, holiday or festival in the United States at the present time is Halloween. We live in an age that is so corrupt theologically, and compromised ethically, that celebrating Halloween has become accepted by most professing Christians and is even advocated by purportedly Reformed churchmen (e.g., James Jordan, Gary DeMar, Steven Wedgworth, David Mathis) and organizations (e.g., the supposedly pro-biblical law or theonomist para-church organization called American Vision founded by Gary DeMar in the 1980s). The fact that Reformed scholars and writers are defending Halloween in print (i.e. publicly) and are apologists for professing Christians participating in Halloween traditions raises some important questions about Halloween itself and the state of modern “conservative” Reformed denominations. Therefore, in this brief essay, we need to analyze the professing Christian churchman’s arguments for celebrating such a day and in the process we will look at the roots and modern practice of Halloween. In this study, we will reveal that many modern Reformed scholars and pastors no longer really adhere to or practice the Reformed faith (i.e. the Reformed faith as defined by the Westminster Standards. It is a modern errant view which defines the Reformed faith solely in terms of soteriology.)

We begin our analysis with an argument from pastor and noted advocate of the Federal Vision heresy: James B. Jordan. (Jordan was a popular Christian Reconstructionist writer and advocate during the 1980s. Apparently, he no longer regards himself as a theonomist.) In an article published recently on the American Vision website called “Concerning Halloween” he writes,

“Halloween” [not Holloween] is simply a contraction for All Hallows’ Eve. The word “hallow” means “saint,” in that “hallow” is just an alternative form of the word “holy” (“hallowed be Thy name”). All Saints Day is November 1. It is the celebration of the victory of the saints in union with Christ. The observance of various celebrations of All Saints arose in the late 300s, and these were united and fixed on November 1 in the late 700s. The origin of All Saints Day and All Saints Eve in Mediterranean Christianity had *nothing* to do with Celtic Druidism or the Church’s fight against Druidism (assuming there ever was any such thing as Druidism, which is actually a myth concocted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by neo-pagans.)

Regarding the first part of Jordan’s statement, we generally concur. The word *hallow* is based on the Hebrew *qadesh* (in Piel) or the Greek word *agniazō* meaning to render *sacred*, set apart, consecrated, or holy (e.g., Ex. 28:38; 29:1; Lev. 22:2; Num. 5:10). The English word simply comes from the Saxon verb “to make holy.” They would thus speak of *hallowed* days, persons, things, places and rites.

In addition, the word Halloween (pronounced hal-ō-ēn) originally referred to a holy day in the church [liturgical] year called “all hallows eve.” The great church historian Philip Shaff gives a historical sketch of its papal origins. He writes,

In addition to the commemoration days of particular saints, two festivals were instituted for the commemoration of all the departed.

The Festival of ALL SAINTS was introduced into the West by Pope Boniface IV. on occasion of the dedication of the Pantheon in Rome, which was originally built by Agrippa in honor of the victory of Augustus at Actium, and dedicated to Jupiter Vindex; it survived the old heathen temples, and was presented to the Pope by the Emperor Phocas, A.D. 607; whereupon it was cleansed, restored and dedicated to the service of God in the name of the ever-Virgin Mary and all martyrs. Baronius tells us that at the time of the dedication on May 13 the bones of the martyrs from the various cemeteries or in solemn procession transferred to the church in twenty-eight carriages. From Rome the festival spread during the ninth century over the West, and Gregory IV. induced Lewis the Pious in 835 to make it general in the Empire. The celebration was fixed on the first of November for the convenience of the people who after harvest had a time of leisure, and were disposed to give thanks to God for all his mercies.

The Festival of ALL SOULS is a kind of supplement to that of All Saints, and is celebrated on the day following (Nov. 2). Its introduction is traced to Odilo, Abbot of Cluny, in the tenth century. It spread very soon without a special order, and appealed to the sympathies of that age for the sufferings of the souls in purgatory. The worshippers appear in mourning; the mass for the dead is celebrated with the “*Dies irae, Dies illa,*” and the oft-repeated “*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.*” In some places (e.g. in Munich) the custom prevails of covering the graves on that day with the last flowers of the season.<sup>1</sup>

*The New Westminster Directory of Liturgy and Worship* adds these details:

The first mention of All Saints is found in a feast commemorating the transfer of relics of martyrs from the catacombs to the Pantheon in Rome by Pope Boniface IV and the consecration of that building on 13 May 609. The date seems to have moved to 1 November after the dedication on this day of a chapel to the Savior, Mary, the apostles, martyrs and confessors in St. Peter’s. Pope Gregory III (731-41) instructed that a short office of all the saints be recited there each evening. The feast of All Martyrs and All Saints and of Our Lady was renamed the feast of All Saints in 835.<sup>2</sup>

This is the Christian or, more accurately, the Roman Catholic origin of the day. Churchmen such as James B. Jordan and PCA pastor Steven Wedgworth look at this history and dismiss the pagan origins argument (common among old-style Fundamentalists) as nonsense. Wedgworth writes, “The Christian Halloween is simply All Saints Day and for Protestantism, Reformation

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Shaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, [1910] 1987), 4:445-446.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in Steven Wedgworth, *Halloween: Its Creation and Recreation*, <http://calvinistinternational.com/2013/10/30/halloween-creation-recreation/>

Day. Understood rightly, these two are not different holidays, of course, but rather one and the same, as the great Protestant Reformers are themselves saints whom we commemorate. To continue this religious tradition is wholly appropriate and needs no further accommodation to other manufactured ‘traditions.’”<sup>3</sup>

The reasoning of pastors such as Jordan and Wedgeworth raises an important question. If Reformed Christians could separate all the pagan traditions that have been mixed in with the original *all-hallows-eve*, would it then it be a hallowed or holy day acceptable to Jehovah that believers should celebrate? The answer to this question is: most certainly not! The fact that Jordan and Wedgeworth could appeal to the day as hallowed because it was made up by a corrupt, Romanizing, superstitious church and was put into canon law by a pope reveals the sad state of modern “conservative” American Presbyterianism.

Does the church or general assembly or pope have the authority to declare a day to be holy, or sanctified or set apart that is not authorized by the word of God? The answer to this question is no. Presbyterians are supposed to believe and teach that the church’s job is purely ministerial and that it is only to require what the Bible requires. It is only to authorize what is authorized by Scripture. Thus, the Scottish Presbyterian *First Book of Discipline* says, the “keeping of holy days..., all those that the papists have invented, as the feast...of Christmas [or “all hallows eve” or “all saints day”]...which things because in God’s Scriptures they neither have commandment nor assurance, we judge them utterly to be abolished from this realm.” Not only was the Christian [liturgical] year “utterly abolished” by the 1638 Glasgow Assembly, the Scottish Parliament made the celebration of Roman Catholic holy days illegal. The reasoning of the 1638 General Assembly was simple: “because they [Roman Catholic holy days] are neither commanded nor warranted by Scripture” (Act session 17). In the Directory for Public Worship in the original Westminster Standards we read, “There is no day commanded in Scripture to keep holy under the gospel but the Lord’s day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival days vulgarly called *holy-days*, having no warrant in the Word of God, are not to be continued.” The Westminster Larger Catechism answer to question 109 explains their thinking. It condemns “all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever.”

That “all hallows eve” or “all saints day” is unscriptural even without the Celtic pagan additions is obvious, for (1) we have no command, precedent or example for it in the Old or New Testament; (2) the Roman Catholic holy day involved the worshiping of relics, prayers for the dead, the adoration and worship of martyrs, prayers to prominent dead saints, processions for the dead and masses for the dead; (3) in celebrating it we express a religious homage not to God who never commanded it, but to corrupt church authorities and the pope who appointed it on their own authority, which is nothing but the commandment and doctrine of man. Thus, it is not the

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<sup>3</sup>Steven Wedgeworth, *Halloween: Its Creation and Recreation*, 13 at [calvinistinternational.com/2013/10/30/halloween-creation-recreation](http://calvinistinternational.com/2013/10/30/halloween-creation-recreation).

church taking dominion over Satan's realm, but the church playing God and acting humanistically.

Thus, we see that the argument that it is a Christian holy day is not true. It is neither holy nor Christian. It is a human tradition, a festival held by Roman Catholics, not by faithful or confessional Presbyterians. While it is still held by Lutheran and Anglican churches, it is important to understand that these communions never accepted the Reformed understanding of *sola Scriptura* or the regulative principle of worship.

The Episcopal Church teaches that "the Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies" (The Thirty-Nine Articles; Art. 20)... Every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority... (Art. 34). Consequently, if the church wants "all-hallows-eve" or "all-saints-day," then so be it. Rites, ceremonies and holy days can be *made up* by churchmen at will and dispensed with at will. They would argue that nothing should explicitly contradict the word of God and that all things must be done unto edification, but man does have such an intrinsic authority. This teaching is Roman Catholic to the core and humanistic. This viewpoint, which really forms the foundation of Jordan's main argument, suffers from three serious errors. First, it does in fact contradict Scripture, in that the Bible explicitly teaches that men do not have any authority to decree or make up anything relating to worship, ethics or doctrine. Men are not to add to or detract from what the word of God teaches on these matters (Gen. 4:3-5; Heb. 11:4; Ex. 20:4-5; Deut. 5:8-9; 12:-32; Lev. 10:1-2; 2 Sam. 6:3-4, 6-7; 1 Chron. 15:13-15; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 1 Kgs. 12:27-33; 2 Chron. 11:14-15; Mt. 15:1-9; 28:20; Mk. 7:1-13; Jn. 4:19-24; Col. 2:8, 16-23; etc.). Man-made religious or holy days are human traditions that are not only never authorized by Scripture, but also historically have detracted from the only holy day that God has instituted, the Lord's day or the Christian Sabbath. God gave us a day to honor, commemorate and worship Jesus Christ the Savior, Messiah and Son of God. He did not set aside a day to worship relics, or say mass for the dead, or venerate dead saints or pray to the departed prominent saints or honor dead Christians in any way. We honor the apostles, evangelists and Reformers only by obeying Scripture.

Second, holy days made up by the church or the pope do not and cannot edify, for they are not based on Scripture. The faith that sanctifies must be a faith in God's word, not man's inventions. As John Knox writes,

It is not enough that man invent ceremony, and then give it a signification, according to his pleasure.... But if that anything proceed from faith, it must have the word of God for the assurance; for ye are not ignorant, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Now, if ye will prove that your ceremonies proceed from faith, and do please God, ye must prove God in expressed words has commanded them: Or else shall ye never prove, that they proceed from faith, nor yet that they please God; but that they are sin, and do displease him, according to the words of the apostle, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John Knox, William Croft Dickenson, ed., *John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 1:87.

Third, the idea that the church or the pope can make up holy days is derived from a deficient view of the perfection and sufficiency of Scripture. If the Christian Sabbath, as well as the worship and government that God has instituted in His word, are sufficient, then it obviously does not need supplementation. The Presbyterian and Puritan teaching on the absolute authority and sufficiency of God's word, for faith, ethics and worship, stands in stark contrast to the Romanist and modern Presbyterian backslidden teaching on this matter. To depart from this Scriptural teaching and doctrinal attainment of our spiritual forefathers is the utmost in human pride, impertinence and pretentiousness, for it implies that man knows better than God, that man can improve upon what Jehovah has commanded. It assumes that the inherent corruption of original sin does not disqualify man from such crucial church matters.

Fourth, such human traditions (i.e. recurring or yearly holy days to honor departed saints) can and has led to the worshiping of prominent saints in the past. Heresies and human traditions have a certain historical trajectory that can lead from simple corruption to outright idolatry. The apostate monstrosity called the Roman Catholic Church took many centuries to become the satanic beast that persecuted true believers in the sixteenth century. This is one reason why we need to draw the line where the Bible and the First and Second Reformation Presbyterians drew the line. If we cannot prove it from Scripture, then we must not do it.

## Victory Through Mockery

After assuming a Roman Catholic worldview and standing upon human tradition, Jordan next appeals to the power of mockery as a tool for vanquishing the forces of Satan. He writes,

The concept, as dramatized in Christian custom, is quite simple: On October 31, the demonic realm tries one last time to achieve victory, but is banished by the joy of the Kingdom.

What is the means by which the demonic realm is vanquished? In a word: mockery. Satan's great sin (and our great sin) is pride. Thus, to drive Satan from us we ridicule him. This is why the custom arose of portraying Satan in a ridiculous red suit with horns and a tail. Nobody thinks the devil really looks like this; the Bible teaches that he is the fallen Arch-Cherub. Rather, the idea is to ridicule him because he has lost the battle with Jesus and he no longer has power over us.

(The tradition of mocking Satan and defeating him through joy and laughter plays a large role in Ray Bradbury's classic novel, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, which is a Halloween novel.)

The gargoyles that were placed on the churches of old had the same meaning. They symbolized the Church ridiculing the enemy. They stick out their tongues and make faces at those who

would assault the Church. Gargoyles are not demonic; they are believers ridiculing the defeated demonic army.

Thus, the defeat of evil and of demonic powers is associated with Halloween. For this reason, Martin Luther posted his 95 challenges to the wicked practices of the Church to the bulletin board on the door of the Wittenberg chapel on Halloween. He picked his day with care, and ever since Halloween has also been Reformation Day.

Similarly, on All Hallows' Eve (Hallow-Even – Hallow-E'en – Halloween), the custom arose of mocking the demonic realm by dressing children in costumes. Because the power of Satan has been broken once and for all, our children can mock him by dressing up like ghosts, goblins, and witches. The fact that we can dress our children this way shows our supreme confidence in the utter defeat of Satan by Jesus Christ – we have NO FEAR!<sup>5</sup>

PCA pastor Steven Wedgworth takes pleasure in Jordan's argument saying, "This sort of turning of the tables has a delightful quality about it, and there is a sort of imaginative genius at work in the article.... There is certainly something to the point about righteous mockery.... However, the claim that this idea serves as the foundation of Halloween lacks any historical support" ("Halloween: Its Creation and Recreation," 2).

This argument from Jordan may seem clever and may appeal to those who are looking for an excuse to fit in with our culture's heathen customs, but it does not hold water historically, logically or biblically. This can be seen in the following observations.

First, the idea that children or adults dress up like the devil, or witches, or ghosts, or goblins in order to mock or ridicule Satan and his demonic hosts is complete nonsense. Apparently, Jordan made it up because it is imaginative and sounds clever. Do the people who dress up like Snow White or Bruce Springsteen or the Jolly Green Giant do so to mock them? No, of course not! Generally, they do it because it is a custom associated with Halloween and they think it is fun. They want to look cool, creative and or scary. Perhaps this is why Jordan appeals to a work of fiction that does not *specifically* deal with the topic as a source of authority (Ray Bradbury's, *Something Wicked Comes This Way*; I was not aware that Bradbury was a theologian, historian or even a Christian.) In addition, we need to point out that gargoyles are not "believers ridiculing of the defeated demonic army" as Jordan asserts. They could be several things, imitations of chimerical [imaginary] animals, male figures [*telamones*, *atlantes*], female figures [*cariatides*], or symbolic monsters. In France, the symbolic monsters were emblems of paganism conquered by Christianity (see Adeline's "Sculptures Grotesque et Symboliques"). They were not Christians or even demons. Although they clearly involve an artistic form of satire, they do not justify the Romanist pagan day of Halloween. The use of carved or terra-cotta animals, humans or creatures to remove water from the roofs of buildings comes from the Greeks and the Romans. (The word "gargoyle" comes from the Latin *gurgulio* which refers not to a monster or fanciful creature but the gurgling sound of water.) It is not a good idea to base one's

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<sup>5</sup> James Jordan, *Concerning Halloween*, page 2.

theology or religious practice on rain gutters. It may sound profound, but it is profoundly arbitrary.

Second, where is the exegetical basis from Scripture that Christians take dominion or defeat the powers of darkness through mockery or ridicule? We see the apostles and evangelists preaching the gospel, teaching the whole counsel of God and soberly warning the heathen to reject idols and turn to the true and living God through Christ. But we do not see them dressing up like witches, demons, Satan, sorcerers, warlocks, false gods or mediums. Do Jordan and American Vision really believe that Paul or Peter or John would dress Christian children up as ghosts, witches, zombies (i.e. rotting corpses), Satan, demons, or vampires as a method of extending Christ's kingdom? Would the inspired apostles tell little children to *pretend* to be bad so that evil may be defeated or so good may come of it? (cf. Rom. 6:1-3) Such argumentation is not only arbitrary but ludicrous.

It is true that, under divine inspiration, the prophets pointed out the complete stupidity, absurdity, irrationality and insanity of idolatry. But these were intellectual arguments based on the truth. Isaiah did not dress up his children in costumes of Baal. Jeremiah did not go to the office party dressed as Dagon or Molech. Elijah made fun of the prophets of Baal using argumentation. He did not dress up like Baal and bob for pomegranates. The prophets mocked the false gods of the heathen, as we should intellectually ridicule the false gods and worldviews of today. This mockery, once again, did not involve imitation or costume parties or chaos festivals or heathen rites; *it was theological, not theatrical.*

Interestingly, we do not find Christians making fun of or mocking Satan in the Bible at all. His complete defeat by Jesus Christ is described, but there is nothing about mockery or jesting at all. The reason for this seems to be that *mockery* of Satan, a spiritual being much more powerful than man, is somehow inappropriate. Two intimately related New Testament passages certainly point in this direction. In 2 Peter 2:10-11 we read, "...those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord." The passage contrasts the behavior of arrogant, antinomian false teachers with that of holy angels. The word translated "dignitaries" (*doxas*) literally means "glories" and is regarded by most scholars as referring to angelic beings, not human authorities (e.g., "glorious ones" [RSV, JB]; "the glories of the unseen world" [Phillips]; "glorious beings" [Simon Kistemaker, GNB, MLB, SEB]; "angelic majesties" [NASB]; "celestial beings" [NAB, NEB]). While it is true that some interpreters apply the word "glories" to human authorities who possess leadership in the church or the state, the context (v. 11) and a closely related passage in Jude rule out such an interpretation. In 2 Peter, the reserved behavior of the good angels to "the glories" corresponds to Michael the Archangel's incredible restraint in his confrontation with Satan in Jude 9. (Most scholars believe that 2 Peter was written after Jude and that Peter has Jude 9 in mind.) Thus, "glories" refers to evil angels. This makes sense, for good angels would have nothing with which to revile or mock other good angels.

The word translated “reviling” or “reproaching” is *blasphemon* which is where we get the word blasphemy. When it is used toward God, it refers to impious insults. When it is used of men or angels it refers to words of insult, mockery or satire. It refers to profane, vulgar, or contemptuous speech. It is reviling, abusive, railing or despising speech intended to offend and cause pain to those one hates or is angry with. The wicked leaders in 2 Peter 2:10-11 are so arrogant they are unafraid to insult and mock the evil celestial beings or demons. While this seems rather odd to our ears and explains why interpreters ignore Jude 9 and twist the passage to refer *only* to human authorities, it is clearly the teaching of God’s holy word. Peter H. Davids writes, “The devil himself is not to be the object of insult. The N[ew] T[estament] looks on such mockery as gross presumption, a pride based on a false claim to knowledge and power (Jude 8-10; II Pet. 2:10-12).”<sup>6</sup> Consequently, these false teachers reveal their arrogance and ignorance by not hesitating and hurling insults at Satan’s demons.

While churchmen may differ regarding 2 Peter 2:10-11, Jude 8-9 is unambiguous and its plain meaning cannot be circumvented: “Likewise also these dreamers [i.e. certain ungodly antinomian men who have crept into the church unnoticed; cf. v. 4] defile the flesh, reject authority, speak evil of dignitaries [*doxas*: literally “glories”]. Yet Michael the Archangel in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling [*blasphemias*] accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” The term “glories” or “glorious ones” cannot refer here to political or church leaders. “In light of the context (cf. 9) and 2 Pet. ii.10f., which borrows from this verse, there can be no doubt that it here denotes a class of angelic beings; and this usage of the noun is supported by LXX Ex. xv.11. ‘Glory’ (*doxa*) originally stands for the numinous radiance which belongs to God Himself (e.g., Ex. xxiv.16f.; xxxiii.18-23; Ps. xix.1), but later the angels who surround Him come to be regarded as sharing in it [not ontologically but reflectively] (cf. Philo, *Spec. leg* i.8.45: ‘by thy glory I understand the powers which keep watch around thee’). So we hear of ‘cherubim of glory’ in Heb. ix.5, ‘angel of glory’ in Test. Lev. xviii.5, and ‘powers of glory’ in Test. Jud. xxv.2. The leap to calling angels ‘glories’ *tout court* cannot have been a very difficult one.”<sup>7</sup>

The fact that “glorious ones” are set in parallel with Satan in verse 9 indicates that it is improper to mock the devil and demons. The fact that these are evil beings causes problems for churchmen and interpreters, yet it cannot be denied. The fact that Michael the archangel’s treatment of the devil is set before us as an example of how to behave, settles the issue. [“In the prophecy of Daniel, the name Michael belongs to the angel who is ‘one of the chief princes’ (10:13) and ‘the great prince who protects’ the people Israel (12:1). He opposes and overcomes demons that Satan has sent to influence the rulers of Persia and Greece (10:13, 20).”<sup>8</sup>] We are to refrain from hurling insults and mockery at the devil. We can, however, teach what the Scriptures have to say regarding him and ask God to rebuke him. Even though these beings are fallen and wicked, there is something inappropriate or unseemly about hurling insults or mockery

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<sup>6</sup> As quoted in Simon J. Kistemaker, *James, Epistles of John, Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986, 87), 297.

<sup>7</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (Peabody, MA: Hendriksen, 1969), 263.

<sup>8</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker, 385.

at them. This likely is due to their original created position as glorious beings that had a higher rank than mankind. In a similar vein, fallen, wicked men are to be treated with a certain restraint due to their creation in the image of God. Thus, Christians are to speak the truth in love to sodomites and other gross sinners and not insult and mock them. Truth and divine power needs no support from insults and railing mockery. The false gods were mocked, but they were only wood and stone. This is “a memorandum to all disputants, never to bring railing accusations into their disputes.”<sup>9</sup> There is to be a meekness and modesty within us that will not permit us to use the improper language of insult, mockery or malicious speech even against God’s most hardened enemies. Jude uses the argument of the greater to the lesser. If Michael the archangel did not hurl insults, how much more should sinful man refrain from such mockery and reviling.

Third, how do children who dress up like witches, demons, wizards, ghosts and the devil show their confidence in Christ’s utter defeat of Satan? This is an arbitrary and strange argument. Do children show their confidence in Jesus’ victory by also dressing up as serial killers, transvestites, prostitutes, child molesters, sodomites and wicked rulers (e.g., Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, Stalin, Nero)? Are the ignorant heathens who dress up like witches, demons, rotting corpses, ghosts and Satan doing so to glorify God? Does Jordan really believe that imitating satanic behaviors and personages sets back the kingdom of darkness? Could Christians and witches, satanists and warlocks all be doing the same things and yet simultaneously be fighting on opposite sides, for two diametrically opposed kingdoms? Is such thinking “imaginative genius” or irrational nonsense?

In addition, imitating pagan practices as a supposed form of mocking Satan contradicts many other biblical passages. “Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are futile...” (Jer. 10:2-3). Obviously, Christians are not supposed to mock Satan and the heathen through a ridicule-laced form of imitation. But rather they are to overthrow and forever banish such dark practices. “You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the LORD your God *with* such *things*.... [A]nd that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way...” (Deut. 12:2-4, 30-31). The biblical pattern of dominion is the utter destruction of heathenism and its replacement by the practice of the true religion.

This point is brought out clearly in New Covenant revelation by Paul: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose [i.e. reprove] them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret” (Eph. 5:11-12). The “unfruitful works of darkness” are activities that spring from darkness. Darkness refers to that which is against God and is evil and satanic. It refers to the realm of thought that is non-

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (McLean, VA: MacDonald, n.d.), 6:1113.

illuminated by the Holy Spirit and thus flows from the spirit of this world. Everything that springs from darkness is a work of darkness. Christians are to have no fellowship with them. “Those who have things in common, who are congenial, who have the same view, feelings, and interests, and who therefore delight in each other society, are said to be in fellowship.... To have fellowship with the works of darkness, therefore, is to delight in them and to participate in them. All such association is forbidden as inconsistent with the character of the children of light.”<sup>10</sup> Hendriksen writes, “Such works are called *unfruitful*. They are sterile in the sense that they do not glorify God, do not win the neighbor for Christ, and do not bring inner peace or satisfaction. Note that Paul recognizes no twilight zone. Although according to Scripture there are degrees of sinfulness and also degrees of holiness, nevertheless, there is no region of the shades. A person is either a believer or an unbeliever. Works belong either to the light or to the darkness. Those who have sworn allegiance to the Ruler of the realm of light *must take no part whatever* in the empty, futile, thoroughly disappointing, works of darkness.”<sup>11</sup> Professing Christian parents who dress up their children as ghosts, witches, goblins, pirates, etc. are *not* doing so in order to mock Satan. They are ignorantly following a non-biblical or non-authorized heathen custom. They are simply following the way of the world because they are not looking at society and culture through the lens of Scripture and the Christian world and life view. The practice of Halloween is *not* an act of faith, for it is *not* rooted in Scripture at all. The fact that it is loved by the heathen and is a high holy day of Wiccans and Satanists ought to make professing Christians think twice before they accept Jordan’s non-exegetical, highly imaginative and arbitrary reasons for participating in a custom from the realm of darkness. Remember, it was made up by Roman Catholics who worshiped the dead and it (our modern Halloween) clearly does have pagan elements (this will be discussed below).

Our contention that we are not to mock Satan by participating in a heathen custom is reinforced by Paul’s inspired method for dealing with the works of darkness. He says that we must not only avoid everything that comes from the realm of darkness but must also expose, or literally in Greek “reprove” or “convince,” them with argumentation. “This verb [*elegchein*] occurs 17 times in the New Testament, and here are some of the verses. Matthew 18:15, ‘If your brother sins, go and reprove him.’ Luke 3:19, ‘Herod was reprovved by him.’ John 16:8, ‘When he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin.’ Titus 1:13 and 2:15, ‘Reprove them severely.... These things speak with all authority.’”<sup>12</sup> The word means to rebuke another with arguments from Scripture in order to convince him of the guilt of his sin. This is a form of

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Hodge, *Ephesians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, [1856] 1964), 212.

<sup>11</sup> William Hendriksen, *Galatians and Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967, 68), 233.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon H. Clark, *Ephesians* (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1985), 175. Some commentators argue that verse 11 cannot refer to a verbal reproof of sin for verse 12 says that it is shameful to even mention the wicked deeds done by the children of darkness. Instead of using verse 12 to cancel out the plain and obvious meaning of verse 11, it is better to view 12 as simply emphasizing just how wicked the works of darkness really are. The apostle himself often lists works of darkness in his epistles (e.g., see Eph. 5:3-4). Christians are to reprove the works of darkness and not gossip about them or dwell upon them. One can use Scripture to condemn homosexuality without going into detail regarding their filthy, disgusting, abominable, accursed practices. Paul did not give works of darkness the silent treatment and neither should we.

teaching, for all of the passages noted speak of “reproof” as coming by means of direct communication, by word-of-mouth. This would rule out using mockery by dressing up like Satan and his minions. What people need is not mockery or play-acting or drama or stagecraft. They need the light of the word of God applied to specific sins. The God-ordained method of dealing with sin and evil is to shine the light of divine truth upon them with intellectual arguments. The truth, when accompanied by a work of the Spirit, is efficacious. It is the biblical duty of all Christians *not* to dress up like witches and Satan, but rather to shine the light of divine truth on all the works of darkness in order to convict those who contradict. Any moron can dress up like a witch or ghost and bob for apples. It takes effort and study, however, to reprove evil in a biblical, effective manner. Those who love Jehovah are called upon to hate (Ps. 97:10) and verbally reprove evil, not to imitate it, participate in it or try and “Christianize” it.

## Is Halloween a Pagan Holy Day?

We have already noted that Halloween or All Hallows Eve is a Roman Catholic holy day that has nothing to do with the word of God. It is a human tradition that has not been authorized as a religious or sanctified day in Scripture. Therefore, as Reformed Christians who are supposed to adhere to *sola Scriptura*, we must have nothing to do with it, whether it is heathen or not. (We must remember that James Jordan and most modern “conservative” Presbyterians reject the regulative principle as it applies to worship and rules for the church, so the fact that it is Romanist does not bother them.)<sup>13</sup> In addition, we have noted that Jordan’s argument that Christians should achieve victory through mockery contradicts the explicit teaching of Scripture. Another popular argument for “Reformed” Halloween apologists is that the idea of pagan origins is simply wrong or at least greatly exaggerated. Coupled with this assertion is a secondary argument that even if a few pagan folklore elements remain, they are now just harmless domesticated activities that should not be frowned upon.

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<sup>13</sup> Jordan has a history of rejecting the regulative principle of worship and promoting Roman Catholic types of worship using interpretive maximalism and human invention as his platform. This can be seen in the following quotes from his book *Sociology of the Church* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Ministries, 1986): “Biblical teaching as a whole is quite favorable to Christmas as an annual ecclesiastical festival.... As I study Scripture, I find that Lutheran and Anglican churches are more biblical in their worship [than Baptist and Reformed], despite some problems” (210). “What I am saying is that the custom [of crossing oneself] is not unscriptural, and that the conservative church at large should give it some thought” (212). “This [the Scripture reading and sermon] is all designed to lead us to the second act of sacrifice: the Offertory. The Offertory is not a ‘collection,’ but the act of self-immolation.... Thus, the offering plates are brought down front to the minister, who holds them up before God (‘heave offering’) and gives them to Him” (27). “The whole-personal priesthood of all believers means not only congregational participation (which requires prayer books), but also holistic ‘doing.’ It means singing, falling down, kneeling, dancing, clapping, processions, and so forth” (32). “By requiring knowledge before communion, the church cut its children off from the Table.... If we are to have reformation, we must reject this residuum of Gnosticism and return to an understanding that the act of the Eucharist precedes the interpretation of it” (38). Instead of developing his views on worship from the historic Protestant view of interpretation (the historical-grammatical-theological method), Jordan argues from “large, overarching principles of worship” (209) and thus often engages in highly speculative, creative applications. If one disagrees with Jordan’s arbitrary, Romanist, “high-church” views, he is treated to an *ad hominem* general attack and labeled (with absolutely no proof whatsoever) as Neoplatonic, Nestorian, Gnostic, nominalistic, stoic, etc.

The problem with dealing with arguments based on ancient history is that one can pick and choose various historians based on one's point of view. Christian pastors do not have the time and resources to go to Europe and check original sources. From my personal study of this topic, I believe that the majority view of scholars, that many aspects of modern Halloween are rooted in paganism, is very likely true. The following quotes are from secular authors who do not have an ax to grind in either direction. Nicholas Rogers writes,

Halloween is, quite literally, the popular derivative of All Hallow Even, or the eve of All Saints' Day (1 November) Taken together with All Soul's Day, which falls on 2 November, it is a time assigned in the Christian calendar for honoring the saints and the newly departed. In past centuries, it was also the occasion for praying for souls in purgatory. Yet because Halloween is popularly associated with the supernatural, it is often believed to have strong pagan roots that were never eliminated by the holidays subsequent Christianization.

Some folklorists have detected its origins in the Roman feast of Pomona, the goddess of fruits and seeds, or in the Festival of the dead called Parentalia. More typically, it has been linked to the Celtic Festival of Samhain or Samuin (pronounced sow-an or sow-in), meaning summers end. In the tenth-century Gaelic text *Tochmarc Emire*, the heroine Emer mentions Samhain as the first of the four quarter days in the medieval Irish calendar, "when the summer goes to its rest." Paired with the feast of Beltane, which celebrated the life-generating powers of the sun, Samhain beckoned to winter and the dark nights ahead. It was quintessentially "an old pastoral and agricultural festival," wrote J. A. MacCulloch, "which in time came to be looked upon as affording assistance to the powers of growth in their conflict with the powers of blight." The feast of Samhain was the occasion of stock-taking and in-gathering, of reorganizing communities for the winter months, including the preparation of quarters for itinerant warriors and shamans. It was also a period of supernatural intensity, when the forces of darkness and decay were said to be abroad, spelling out from the *sidh*, the ancient mounds or barrows of the countryside. To ward off these spirits, the Irish built huge, symbolically regenerative bonfires and invoked the help of the gods through animal and perhaps even human sacrifice.

Not all writers agree up precisely what went on at the feast of Samhain, but many stress its elemental primitivism and its enduring legacy to the character of Halloween, particularly in terms of its omens, propitiations, and links to the otherworld. Although the divinatory practices associated with Halloween have long since disappeared, the holiday's netherworld resonances are still reproduced in jack-o'-lanterns and ghoulish garb.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1926 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* we read,

Hallowe'en and its formally attendant ceremonies long antedate Christianity. The two chief characteristics of the ancient Hallowe'en were the lighting of bonfires and the belief that of all nights in the year this is the one during which ghosts and witches are most likely to wander abroad. Now on or about 1<sup>st</sup> of November the Druids held their great autumn festival and lighted fires in honour of the Sun-god in thanksgiving for the harvest. Further, it was a

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<sup>14</sup> Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11-12.

Druidic belief that on the eve of this festival Saman, lord of death, called together the wicked souls that within the past 12 months had been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals. Thus it is clear that the main celebrations of Hallowe'en were purely Druidical, and this is further proved by the fact that in parts of Ireland the 31<sup>st</sup> of October was, and even still is, known as *Oidhche Shamhna*, "Vigil of Saman." On the Druidic ceremonies were grafted some of the characteristics of the Roman festival in honor of Pomona held about the 1st of November, in which nuts and apples, as representing the winter store of fruits, played an important part. Thus the roasting of nuts and the sport known as "apple-ducking" – attempting to seize with the teeth an apple floating in a tub of water, – were once the universal occupation of the young folk in medieval England on the 31st of October. The custom of lighting Hallowe'en fires survived until recent years in the highlands of Scotland and Wales. In the dying embers it was usual to place as many small stones as there were persons around, and the next morning a search was made. If any of the pebbles were displaced it was regarded as certain that the person represented would die within the twelve months.

For details of the Hallowe'en games and bonfires see Brand's *Antiquities of Great Britain*; Chambers's *Book of Days*, Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*, ch. xx. (*Elemente*) and ch. xxxiv. (*Aberglaube*); and J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, vol. iii. Compare also BELTANE and BONFIRE.<sup>15</sup>

The 1953 edition of the *Encyclopedia Americana* says,

HALLOWEEN, hä-l-ō-ēn', or ALL HALLOWS EVE, the evening of October 31, so-called as being the eve or vigil of All Hallows, or festival of All Saints, which falls on the first of November. It is associated in the popular imagination with the prevalence of supernatural influences, and is clearly a relic of pagan times.

In the north of England, halloween is known as Nutcrack Night. In Scotland the ceremonies of the eve were formerly regarded in a highly superstitious light, and Robert Burns' *Hallowe'en* gives a humorous and richly imaginative presentment of the usual ceremonies as practiced in Scottish rural districts in his day. Popular belief ascribed to children born on halloween the faculty of perceiving and holding converse with supernatural beings.<sup>16</sup>

The 1955 edition of the *World Book Encyclopedia* reads,

HALLOWEEN, HAL oh EEN, is a festival celebrated on October 31. Its name means hallowed or holy evening because it comes the day before All Saints' Day. The Church had celebrated All Saints' Day in the 600s, but not on November 1. In modern times, Halloween is celebrated with pranks and parties, and with customs that are a mixture of many beliefs.

The Druids, an order of priests in ancient Gaul and Britain, had an autumn festival. They called their celebration *Samhain* (*SAH win*) or *summer's end*. It was an occasion for feasting on all the kinds of food which had been grown during the summer. The modern customs of decorating for Halloween parties with pumpkins, leaves, and cornstalks comes from the Druids. The Druids also believed that on Halloween, ghosts, spirits, fairies, witches, and

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<sup>15</sup> *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information* (London: 1926), 12:857-858.

<sup>16</sup> *The Encyclopedia Americana* (New York: Americana Corp., 1953), 13:649.

elves came out to harm people. They built large bonfires to scare such creatures away. From these druidic beliefs and customs comes the modern use of witches and ghosts in Halloween festivities.

The early peoples of Europe also had a Festival which was somewhat like the Druid holiday. In the 700s, the Church named November 1 as All Saints' festival, or the day for honoring all saints. The old pagan customs and the Christian festival were combined into the holiday which people celebrate today as the Halloween festival.

Halloween is a time of many parties for both grown-ups and children. There are special games which are played at Halloween, such as bobbing for apples and telling fortunes and ghost stories. Many schools have parties to which children come dressed in costumes. Prizes are given for the best costumes.

In early times in the United States, Halloween was also a time for playing harmless pranks. But in later years, many of the pranks the boys and girls played on the night of Halloween were not so harmless. Sheds were overturned, windows were broken, and much property was damaged. In some cities, the police work hard on Halloween to keep too much damage from being done. Many communities now realize that the best way to stop such pranks is to give a large party instead. There are Halloween parades and community gatherings which provide fun in place of pranks.<sup>17</sup>

*The New Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia* (1950) adds these comments:

HALLOWEEN or ALL HALLOWS EVE, name applied it to the evening of October 31, preceding the Christian feast of Hallowmas, Allhallows, or All Saints' Day. The observances connected with Halloween are believed to have originated among the ancient Druids (q.v.), who believed that on that evening Saman, the Lord of the dead, called forth hosts of evil spirits. The Druids customarily lit great fires on Halloween, apparently for the purpose of warding off the spirits. Among the ancient Celts (see CELTIC LANGUAGE AND PEOPLES), Halloween was the last evening of the year, and it was regarded as a propitious time for examining the portentous of the future. The Celts also believed that the spirits of the dead revisited their earthly homes on that evening. After their conquest of Britain the Romans added to the Halloween traditions features of the Roman festival held on November 1 in honor of Pomona, goddess of the fruits of trees.

The Celtic tradition of lighting fires on Halloween survived until modern times in Scotland and Wales, and in the concept of ghosts and which is still common to all Halloween observances. Traces of the Roman harvest Festival survived the custom, prevalent in both the United States and England, of playing games involving fruit, such as ducking for apples in a tub of water, and in the decorative use of pumpkins which are hollowed out, carved to resemble grotesque faces, and illuminated by candles placed inside.<sup>18</sup>

A Christian website gives the following brief history of Halloween's origins:

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<sup>17</sup> *The World Book Encyclopedia* (Chicago: Field Enterprises Inc., 1955), 8:30 to 45-3246.

<sup>18</sup> *The New Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia* (New York: Unicorn Publishers, 1950), 17:6269).

The celebration of what we know as Halloween dates back to before the time of Christ. In the Celtic countries of Britain, Germany, and France, the Druids (the priests and teachers of the Celts) set aside October 31 to honor Samhain, the lord of the dead.<sup>19</sup> At this time of year the crops were harvested and it was a time of general decay. The day honoring Samhain highlighted the gloom and cold of the coming season. The Celts believed that Samhain assembled all the souls of the dead on October 31, the eve of the Celtic new year. This freed them to return to their homes, where their families were to entertain them. If they didn't find an acceptable welcome the spirits would cast spells or cause other problems for the living (the first form of trick or treat) To prepare for the arrival of these spirits the Druids built huge bonfires, sacrificing animals, crops, and even humans. This fire was also used for divinations (they studied the remains of the sacrificed animals). During this ritual, many people wore costumes made of animal heads and skins. When the Romans conquered the Celts, they combined the festival to Samhain with their own festival honoring Pomona, the goddess of fruit and trees, making apples and nuts an important part of the rituals.

Despite the prevalence of Christianity this pagan rite continued. The Irish held parades to honor Muck Olla, one of their gods. A leader wearing a white robe and an animal head marched at the head of the parade. Those who followed him asked for food to help celebrate the October 31 festival, punishing farmers who refused to cooperate (another form of trick or treat). Bonfires raged throughout Wales, Scotland, England on October 31. In the year 834 Pope Boniface IV moved the church feast of All Saints' Day (also known as All Hallows' Day) from May to November 1 to counter this growing pagan rite. October 31 naturally was called All Hallows' Evening - eventually abbreviated Halloween.

In medieval times satanic witches took Halloween as an opportunity to mock the saints of the church commemorated on All Saints' Day. The witches supposedly flew on broomsticks accompanied by black cats (also believed to be a type of witch). In later years the poor in England went door to door for food on November 2, All Souls' Day. Beggars received "soulcakes" in return for their promise to pray for the dead of that household. In America however, because of the strong religious convictions of the early settlers, Halloween celebrations were banned. In the early 1800's, as more immigrants of Celtic origin arrived, Halloween celebrations were instituted.

Despite the contemporary decline in trick or treating (perhaps because of dangers such as poisoned candy) Halloween lives on. School parties, the media, and peer pressure all serve to make Halloween a fun and necessary time in children's eyes.<sup>20</sup>

While historians may disagree about some of the details or the extent of heathen practices, most secular historians acknowledge the incorporation of Celtic/Druid heathen

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<sup>19</sup> According to Isaac Bonewits, a scholar in the ancient Druid religion, "Samhain" is not a deity in Celtic mythology (a "lord of the dead"). He may have been an obscure figure noted for his magical cow. In any case, the pagan and occultic practices associated with the day are not in dispute.

<sup>20</sup> John Stanko, *New Wine Magazine*, 1984, as quoted in *Halloween: A Biblical Perspective*, <http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/halloween.htm>.

practices into Halloween. Whether this occurred before the papal church adopted All Hallows Eve or soon after the spread of Christianity into Ireland and England<sup>21</sup> or in a later period is irrelevant. The fact remains that many modern customs associated with Halloween are heathen to the core. This raises the question: does the Bible teach that pagan religious customs are harmless and can be adopted by Christians; or, does it teach us to emphatically reject such customs? Does the word of God teach us to take dominion over pagan religious practices by incorporating them and “Christianizing” them (syncretism) or does it teach us to utterly destroy them?

In order to deal with these questions, we need to look at two areas. First, what does the Bible have to say about believers and the remnants or monuments of idolatry? This point is important because a number of “Reformed” churchmen have bought into the idea that we ought to express our faith in Christ’s victory by *taking dominion* over the pagan festival and Christianizing it. This is the central argument of Particular Baptist David Mathis, who says in his article, “When Jesus Haunts Your Halloween,”

Those who are in Christ have no need to fear the night. This is now our day. He has won it for us, and will not leave us to fend for ourselves in the devil’s domain.... When Jesus haunts our Halloween, we pour in the extra energy and creativity to capitalize on this opportunity to meet new neighbors and go deep with the old—whether we’re ushering our kids from house to house or leaving our lights on and giving out the best candy.... And when Jesus haunts our Halloween, we fight not only Satan, but fear in our souls. We see that our Halloween horrors reveal our lack of faith in who Jesus is, what he has accomplished...” (2, 3).

The fact that our Lord came to earth and achieved victory at the cross (according to Mathis) means that Christians can celebrate papal/pagan holy days with gusto. Mathis essentially argues that this papal/pagan holy day has been sanctified or transformed into an acceptable day at the cross. In addition, he implies that those who refuse to partake of this papal/pagan day reveal a

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<sup>21</sup> The change of “all hallows day” from May to November 1 in order to appeal to heathen sensibilities is very possible, given the Roman Catholic policy of the absorption of heathen peoples through syncretism. The use of syncretism as a missionary strategy is clearly revealed in Pope Gregory I’s instructions to missionaries given in A.D. 601: “Because they [the pagans] were wont to sacrifice oxen to devils, some celebration should be given in exchange for this...they should celebrate a religious feast and worship God by their feasting, so that still keeping outward pleasures, they may more readily receive spiritual joys” (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, as quoted in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1961], 5:643). We saw that it was Pope Boniface IV who “reconsecrated” the temple of the Pantheon, which had been used for the worship of Cybele, to the virgin Mary and A.D. 609. The temple, which had been used for the worship of many gods, became a place in which people prayed to dead saints and worshiped relics. After 834 when Pope Gregory IV made November 1 All Saints Day, the Mediterranean paganism of the papal original day could now be merged with the Celtic paganism of the newly converted peoples. The Roman Catholic heathen tradition of praying to dead saints and looking for visions of Mary as an answer to life’s problems is a form of necromancy, where one seeks to communicate with the dead. It seems very pious to millions of people, but in reality it is a species of witchcraft. The Bible’s teaching on witchcraft could not be clearer: “There shall not be found anyone among you who makes his son or daughter pass to the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you” (Deut. 18:10-12).

lack of faith in what Christ accomplished and are exhibiting an unholy fear of the devil and the forces of evil.

Before we look at specific passages regarding the remnants or monuments of idolatry, the following needs to be pointed out regarding Mathis' argument. (1) Halloween never really belonged to the devil in the first place. While Jesus defeated the devil at the cross, believers prior to the cross had nothing to fear regarding pagan holy days *unless they participated in such days* and received covenant sanctions from God for engaging in heathen practices. Mathis' argument is not only arbitrary but is unwittingly dispensational. The way to determine our attitude toward papal/pagan holy days and customs is not to make an *arbitrary general application* from the victory of the cross to an acceptance of syncretism with pagan culture. Instead, we should look at biblical law (the Old Testament moral law has a lot to say about this issue) and historical examples from Scripture of how the faithful, dedicated people of God handled this issue.

(2) Refusing to participate in a papal/pagan holy day or custom does not reveal a lack of faith in Christ's victory over Satan; nor does it reveal a fear of the powers of darkness. Rather it reveals a faith and confidence in the many Scriptures which condemn syncretism with heathenism. Mathis probably has no intention of insulting the character of those who emphatically reject papal/pagan holy days and customs; but, because there can be no ethical or theological neutrality, he of necessity must impugn their character. It is for this reason and many others that this issue is so important. Syncretists, of logical necessity, must reject the truth on this topic and must mock those who are faithful to God's law-word. In the Old and New Testament, the syncretists persecuted those who were faithful to the covenant. Because there is no neutrality, today things are the same even though the mockery and persecution is more subtle. Let us, therefore, never confuse dominion or corporate sanctification with syncretism or compromise.

If one studies Scripture, he will see that God never commanded His people to take dominion over heathen religious customs by arbitrarily assigning new, supposedly Christian, meanings to them. Instead, He always explicitly commanded their total destruction. In Exodus 30:20, the golden calf that was used for pagan purposes was burned with fire, ground to powder and scattered upon the water. It was the syncretistic northern kingdom of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that attempted "to take dominion" over the calves and use them for worship (1 Kgs. 12:28). The covenant law requires believers to obliterate everything associated with idolatry and pagan customs: "You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations...served other gods... And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the LORD your God with such things" (Deut. 12:2-4). Craigie writes,

These objects were to be systematically destroyed so that the places associated with them would be divested of any semblance of sanctity. The physical act of destruction was thus a symbolic act of rejection, the rejection of the deities and of the efficacy of the religious system of the Israelites' predecessors on the land. The act of destruction not only removed any subsequent temptation for the Israelites to lapse into foreign

forms of religion, but also obliterated *their name* (i.e., of foreign gods) *from that place*. There was only one name on which the Israelites could call.<sup>22</sup>

By way of illustration, one could compare heathen religious practices and customs to a large pile of dog excrement that one finds in the middle of the living room floor after going out to dinner. If the excrement corresponds to pagan practices and customs, the teaching of biblical law would say get a shovel and remove the excrement from one's house and wash away any trace of it. The view of the Roman Catholic Church, James Jordan and American Vision would be to paint the excrement a pleasant blue color, spray it with perfume and put a pretty bow on it. Then, give it a new Christian-sounding name. The problem with this view (and all attempts at syncretism) is that underneath the façade of human traditions, pagan religious customs and practices are still a pile of excrement in God's eyes. One can no more make them acceptable to God, than one can make a disgusting pile of excrement pleasing. We must learn to view secular humanism and heathen religious customs and practices as God views them. The great passage of time and their incorporation by apostate Roman Catholicism does not make them any more pleasing or acceptable.

A fundamental and necessary condition for the pure and uncontaminated worship and service to God it was the radical elimination of all temptations toward syncretism. Any religious custom employed for idolatry or a pagan world and life view must be identified, rejected and destroyed. Matthew Henry's comments are right on the mark: "To prevent a revolt to false gods, we are forbidden to worship the true God in such a way and manner as the false gods were worshiped in, and are commanded to observe the instituted ordinances of worship that we may adhere to the proper object of worship.... [Thus] they [pagan methods, practices, places, customs, etc.] must be destroyed...so the varying names of them might be buried in oblivion."<sup>23</sup>

That Moses' inspired application of the first and second commandment to Israel is not positive law for Israel only is easily proved by looking at Jacob's application of the same moral teaching in Genesis 35:1-4. When he set out to purify the (i.e. his household and attendants) from all aspects of heathenism, he not only removed their foreign gods but also their earrings as well. Why were these earrings removed? Because they were associated with their old false pagan religion; they were remnants of a heathen worldview and signs of superstition. Similarly, when Elijah went to offer his sacrifice, in his contest with the prophets of Baal, he did not use their pre-existing pagan altar. He did not take something made and set apart for idolatry and attempt to sanctify it for a holy use. Instead, he took stones and built a brand-new altar "in the name of the LORD" (1 Kgs. 18:22). He did not believe in dressing up pagan customs with "Christian" clothing and new names. Moreover, when Jehu went up against the worshipers of Baal and their temple, did he save the temple and set it apart for holy use? No! He slaughtered the worshipers of Baal and then "broke down the sacred pillar of Baal, and tore down the temple of Baal, and made it a refuse dump to this day" (2 Kgs. 10:27).

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<sup>22</sup> P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 216.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:774.

In like manner, when Josiah, one of the best and godliest of all the kings of Judah, set out to remove idolatry from the land he not only destroyed the idols, but also the heathen chapels, shrines, high places, vessels, groves, altars and even the horses and chariots which had been set apart for the worship of the sun. Everything having to do with paganism was obliterated. Do James Jordan, David Mathis and Steven Wedgworth think that Josiah and the other godly kings should have left all the monuments, paraphernalia and heathen customs in place and simply declared to the people that Israel is now taking dominion over them? When Jehovah commanded His people saying, “you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations” (Deut. 18:9) were the satanic Celts excepted? Are not witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy and wizardry abominations which all deserve the death penalty? God certainly thinks so.

The moral law could not be clearer. There are many passages that speak to this issue. “You shall not permit a sorceress [or witch, KJV] to live” (Ex. 22:18). Witches made potions and poisons and were involved in the occult, including attempts to contact the dead. “You shall not...practice divination or soothsaying” (Lev. 19:26). “The person who turns to mediums and a familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 20:6-7). Note that dabbling in such things is a form of infidelity to Jehovah. It is spiritual adultery and it violates the covenant relationship between God and His people. Israel is to keep itself totally separate from such practices. That is what the exhortation to holiness means. They were continually to keep before their minds the requirement of an absolute antithesis between the service of the one true God and that of other gods, spirits, religions or worldviews. They were to be holy by scrupulously keeping the Lord’s commandments and not adding or detracting from them. Syncretism in any form is a denial of the repeated biblical call to holiness, separation or radical antithesis between the church and the world.

Clearly, the practice of papal/pagan holy days and customs violates God’s requirement of a radical separation. If it is immoral to become a witch or sorcerer and practice divination, necromancy and soothsaying, then is also certainly wrong to *imitate* such persons in order to keep a custom and have some fun. We are to imitate Christ, not the worshipers of Baal. With David we should pray, “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (Ps. 17:15). “There shall not be found among you...one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you” (Deut. 18:10-14).

All such practices are an abomination to the Lord. The word “abomination” indicates that God has a supreme disgust, hatred, loathing, detestation and abhorrence of such practices and religious customs. They were forbidden in Israel precisely because they were part of the reason for God’s judgment of the Canaanites. If the Israelites were to avoid God’s covenant sanctions,

which involved being cast out of the land, such practices must be obliterated. They must be covenantally faithful before the Lord. If we are to be blameless and without reproach before Jehovah, should we pretend to adopt these practices or adopt a festival day that exalts such things?<sup>24</sup> Are these things a legitimate way to have fun or glorify God? Can they be done out of faith and a clear conscience?

It ought to be obvious to any objective observer that modern professing Christian apologists for Halloween do not have a leg to stand on. For this reason, they must use highly creative, arbitrary arguments with no biblical exegesis in order to attempt to circumvent the explicit teaching and applications from Scripture. People are willing to accept such flimsy arguments because they are either exceptionally ignorant of the Bible (in particular, the Old Testament moral statutes and case laws) or are looking for an excuse to maintain a pagan custom because they like it and do not want to give it up. Bad arguments only become plausible when they support bad presuppositions. But no matter how hard corrupt churchmen may strive for syncretism and no matter how creative their reasoning is, God hates such things and so must we. Christians can no more make customs and practices rooted in pagan religions or occultic heathenism or even the man-made traditions of an apostate Christianity pleasing to God, then can they somehow make murder, theft, fornication, homosexuality or adultery acceptable.

Consequently, we should heed the inspired words of the apostle Paul: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2). This is the apostle’s version of the frequent Old Testament call to holiness, separation and nonconformity to the customs and practices of the heathen. Christians are not to be like chameleons who adopt whatever color is found in their surroundings. The people of God are not to be conformed to this world (literally, “this age”). We are not to follow the standards or patterns of behavior from the pagan social environment in which we live. Instead of being conformed to the prevailing

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew Henry’s commentary on this passage is excellent. He writes, “Some reasons are given against their conformity to the customs of the Gentiles. 1. Because it would make them abominable to God. The things themselves being hateful to him, those that do them are an abomination; and miserable is that creature that has become odious to its Creator, v. 12. See the malignity and mischievousness of sin; that needs must be an evil thing indeed which provokes the God of mercy to detest the work of his own hands. 2. Because these abominable practices had been the ruin of the Canaanites, of which ruin they were not only the witnesses but the instruments. It would be the most inexcusable folly, as well as the most unpardonable impiety, for them to practice themselves those very things for which they have been employed so severely to chastise others. Did the land spue out the abominations of the Canaanites, and shall Israel lick up the vomit? 3. Because they were *better taught*, v. 13, 14. It is an argument like that of the apostle against Christians walking as the Gentiles walked (Eph. iv. 17, 18, 20): *You have not so learned Christ*. ‘It is true these nations, whom God *gave up to their own hearts’ luster*, and *suffered to walk in their own ways* (Acts xiv. 16), did thus corrupt themselves; but thou art not thus abandoned by the grace of God: *the Lord thy God has not suffered thee to do so*; thou art instructed in divine things, and hast fair warning given thee of the evil of those practices; and therefore, whatever others do, it is expected that thou shouldst be *perfect with the Lord thy God*,’ that is, ‘that thou shouldst give divine honours to him, to him only, and to no other, and not mix any of the superstitious customs of the heathen with his institutions’” (*Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1:801). Does Jordan really believe that the Israelites could adapt Canaanite heathen customs to a form acceptable to God? Does Gary DeMar believe that the Christian reconstruction of society involves absorbing pagan customs that are contrary to the moral law and offensive to God? Sadly, the modern Christian Reconstruction movement has often revealed itself to be antinomian. When it comes to the first table of the law, it often chooses human autonomy over theonomy.

unbelieving culture, we are to be transformed by the Holy Spirit who applies the word of God to our hearts so that ultimately we can transform our culture and Christianize it. Instead of following the lead of pagan Celtic priests and wicked, apostate popes and bishops, we should call upon the nations to obey all that Christ has commanded (Mt. 28:20). (“Both verbs are present passive imperatives and denote the continuing attitudes which we are to retain. We must go on letting ourselves be transformed according to God’s will. J. B. Phillips’ paraphrase catches the alternative: ‘Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its mould, but let God remould your minds from within.’”<sup>25</sup>) The Christian community must submit to Scripture, so that there is a fundamental transformation of conduct, character and customs away from the standards, practices and unbiblical customs of this world that we all may have the mind of Christ. While there are many customs that are indifferent such as baseball, baking apple pie and barbecuing on the Fourth of July, Halloween is not like these innocent customs. It is pagan at its very core. A renewed mind should *not* take pleasure in imitating evildoers and enemies of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. Are we cooperating with the Holy Spirit in our progressive sanctification by submitting to the moral law of God or are we working against this crucial inner transformation by making excuses not to change and conform ourselves to the Word?

### Is Halloween a Thing Indifferent?

Those who want to circumvent the fact that Halloween is pagan/pagan will sometimes contend that such practices no longer bear pagan connotations. They will say that such practices occurred so long in the past that it is silly to make an issue out of them. Such things are now just a harmless fun. Regarding this all too common way of reasoning, we offer the following observations. First, this is essentially an argument that Halloween is a matter that is *adiaphora* or theologically and ethically indifferent. The problem with this viewpoint is that pagan customs (especially ones with religious presuppositions and connotations) cannot be regarded as something indifferent. There are many indifferent cultural customs such as wearing wooden shoes, playing baseball, baking apple pie, growing tomatoes and peppers, and wearing certain types of clothing. Obviously, God does not care if we wear wooden shoes or cook pierogies and there is nothing intrinsically pagan or unethical about growing tomatoes or baking apple pie. (But, all these things must be done to God’s glory [1 Cor. 10:31] according to the general principles of the Word [1 Cor. 14:26, 40] with a spirit of thankfulness for what we have [1 Thess. 5:18].) Halloween, however, is *not indifferent* or ethically neutral. It is regarded as a holy day by Roman Catholics as well as witches, pagans and satanists. It arose out of apostate Christianity and Celtic heathenism. Moreover, even today, it still contains many heathen, objectionable and immoral customs. It is not a mockery of Satan and death as Jordan arbitrarily asserts, but essentially is a celebration of the devil, evil and death. It has more in common with a heathen chaos festival than it does a Christian barbecue, softball game or fellowship dinner. Consequently, we must have nothing to do with it, even though most people think it is just

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<sup>25</sup> John Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 323.

innocent fun. Are Jordan, Mathis and Wedgeworth asking us to take dominion over our heathen culture or are they making clever excuses so that Christians can adopt or incorporate heathen cultural practices into their lives without feeling guilty? One cannot circumvent the fact that Halloween is *not* a blueberry festival or beer gala, or garlic jubilee. It is a pagan festival that is unbiblical and superstitious.

Second, the heathen paganism, of which Druidism and Halloween is only a small sample, is still very active in the world today and is growing rapidly in the Western nations that have abandoned the gospel and embraced secular humanism. The Druids fulfilled the same role as shamans and witch doctors in American Indian and African animist or polytheistic cultures. They were not simply demon worshipping wizards but were the religious leaders, philosophers and supposed healers in society. Their worldview is very active in modern culture in the New Age and Wiccan movements. In Cuban, Dominican, Puerto Rican and Haitian areas, their worldview is reflected in the Santeria cult and voodoo. A great revival of pagan and anti-Christian occultism arose in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a vibrant, Bible-believing Christianity waned.

The sexual revolution, the great rise of drug use, the spread of the occult and the magical arts, the adoption of Hindu pagan philosophies, attacks on monogamous heterosexual marriage and the great expansion of homosexual activity are all an integral part of the rise of paganism. The spread of secular humanism and antinomian rationalism has led to the spread of rank pagan irrationalism, experientialism and mysticism. Humanism and the ancient forms of paganism all have as their goal *autonomous ethics and power*. They seek sovereignty and knowledge apart from Jesus Christ and the true and living God. They seek vitality and regeneration through men acting as their own gods and through ritual chaos. They blur the lines between heaven, earth and hell because they do not hold to the ontological trinity as ultimate and they deny the biblical doctrine of creation. Druidism and all occultic philosophies, of which Halloween is a part, are religious expressions of man desiring to be his own god.

The essential characteristic of this revival of paganism and the occult is *rebellion*. We read in 1 Samuel 15:23, “for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry.” This passage tells us that the essence of opposition to Jehovah and His word and law-order is heathenism and idolatry. The hippie movement was labeled “youth rebellion.” The growth of anti-Christian feminism, the homosexual “rights” movement, and the widespread acceptance of sexual immorality, adultery and perversion was called the “sexual revolution.” Halloween is a rejection of the radical separation between the living and the dead and an exaltation of ritual chaos and destruction.<sup>26</sup> Violence and mayhem have always been associated with the day because ritual chaos is always against the true and living God and a Christian law-

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<sup>26</sup> According to Chris McGowan, a writer for the website “Culture Planet,” the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain did have characteristics of a chaos festival: “On the night of Samhain, the Celts believed the souls of the dead were restless, on the move, and could cross over into the world of the living...fires all over the Celtic world were extinguished the night of Samhain, then relighted from ceremonial blazes kindled by Druids (the religious and intellectual leaders of the pre-Christian Celts). Animals were slaughtered and sacrificed to the Celtic deities.... It was a sacred time, during which warriors were ordered to lay down arms and observe a peace. Great feasting and ritualized drunkenness were the rule: revelers consumed huge quantities of mead and beer” (*A Brief History of Samhain: All Hallows Eve and Halloween*, 3, 4).

order. It symbolizes regeneration or rebirth through lawless and ungodly activities. Modern pagans, like their ancient counterparts, see “themselves as *freedom-fighters*, as heroic champions of freedom against a tyrannical and arbitrary God.”<sup>27</sup> As Rushdoony notes,

Why is rebellion comparable to occultism, to fortune-telling, witchcraft, and every form of such illicit practice? To seek the occultist route to the future is to say that the future is determined apart from God, either by a dark and sinister fate, or else by an ostensibly autonomous man. In any case, the future is determined, and man is capitalized, by means other than those of God’s ordination. For Scripture, it is faith, work, and obedience to the law of God that capitalized man and society spiritually and materially. For occultism, the future can be capitalized only by rebellion against God and against all godly authority.

Revolutionary movements have commonly had a background of atheism, free-masonry, and other occultist beliefs. The very idea of revolution is a belief that destruction, chaos, disobedience, and lawlessness can capitalize a society, and such a belief is basic to occultism. Hence, “rebellion is the sin of soothsaying, and opposition is the sin of heathenism and idolatry.” Such attitudes decapitalize man and society and foster anarchy in every area. . . .

Rebellion thus and all incitement to rebellion is a form or manifestation of occultism. The occult is that which is deliberately concealed from observation or knowledge; it is so concealed because it is antinomian; it is at war with law because it is lawless. It creates an opposition which is in essence idolatry, the enthronement of man’s will as against the word of God.

The rise of occultism thus will foster rebellion in every area of society, and the rise of rebellion will likewise foster occultism. The two are linked and have their common origin in man’s rebellion against God.

St. Paul, in citing the works of men who are not in the Spirit of God but are under the indictment or death penalty of the law, lists the related manifestations of such an unregenerate person:

Now the works of the flesh are in evidence, such as adultery, unchastity, impurity, lewdness, idolatry, magic (KJV, witchcraft), animosities, hatred, jealousy, bad temper, dissensions, a factional spirit, heresies, envy, drunkenness, carousings and everything of the kind, of which I warn you as I did previously, that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21, Berkeley Version).

Rebellion is thus not an isolated fact; it is a part of a much larger pattern. In the history of revolutions and of cultural collapse, the occult plays a significant role. It is an evidence of radical decay and a major influence for destruction.<sup>28</sup>

Roman Catholicism, which gave us the name Halloween, is also still very active and theologically deadly. It functions very similarly to occult paganism in that it seeks to influence the outcome of current and future events through unbiblical means. The Romanist prays to Mary and dead saints in order to achieve prosperity and blessings. This is not much different than that

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<sup>27</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *Law and Society: Volume II of the Institutes of Biblical Law* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1986), 161.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 162-163.

necromancy. It places an intermediary or intermediaries between us and Christ. Instead of looking solely to Christ, the Son of God, the only Mediator between God and men, the poor deluded Roman Catholic places his faith in the dead who cannot hear his prayers and do not have any power to do anything even if they could hear. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church hates the gospel of Jesus Christ and historically has been a chief enemy of true churches and murderer of the saints. The papal church uses human inventions and syncretistic holy days to keep millions of people in darkness. The fact that millions of professing evangelicals are observing a pagan/Roman Catholic holy day which has not been commanded anywhere in God's word, reveals the sad state of modern churches. We should heed the warning of George Gillespie: "We cannot conform, communicate, and symbolize with the idolatrous Papists, in the use of the same, without making ourselves idolaters by participation."<sup>29</sup> Our attitude should be that of the Protestant Reformer Bucer: "I would to God that every holy day whatsoever besides the Lord's day were abolished. The zeal which brought them first in, was without all warrant of the Word, and merely followed the corrupt reason, forsooth to drive out the holy days of the pagans, as one now drives out another. Those holy days have been so tainted with superstitions that I wonder we tremble not at their very names."<sup>30</sup>

The Roman Catholic practice of praying for the dead, with which All Hallows Eve is strongly associated, is not Christian or biblical either. It is based on the thoroughly unscriptural idea that an intermediate state exists between heaven and hell called purgatory. It is where Christians go who are not good enough to go to heaven, nor bad enough to go to hell. One supposedly stays in purgatory and receives pain, anguish and torture until one's venial sins (i.e. sins that do not merit hell) are paid for in full. For some Christians, this may take thousands of years. The papal church claims the people on earth can shorten a person's stay and suffering in purgatory by having masses done on their behalf (this practice costs money), praying for one's loved ones in purgatory or by purchasing a plenary indulgence on their behalf. (We must remember that the doctrine of purgatory was used as a chief means of raising money for the Roman Catholic Church in the late Middle Ages. The doctrine began to be accepted after A.D. 600 when it was propounded by Pope Gregory the Great. It did not become official church dogma until 1459 at the Council of Florence. In 1549, the Council of Trent proclaimed a curse on those who refused to accept this doctrine [the Protestants]).

The practice of praying for the dead in purgatory is especially wicked because it is an implicit denial of the sufficiency and perfection of Christ's atoning death. If a person believes in Jesus as He is revealed in the Bible, all of his sin and guilt (past, present and future) is imputed to the Savior on the cross and expiated (it is paid for in full at Golgotha and forever removed or washed away or covered). Moreover, the Redeemer's perfect sinless life (His personal positive law-keeping or righteousness) is reckoned to the believing sinner's account and therefore the believer possesses eternal life the very moment he believes. "For God so loved the world that He

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<sup>29</sup> *English Popish Ceremonies*, (1637), 3:35.

<sup>30</sup> Martin Bucer, quoted in William Ames, *A Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship* (n. p. 1633), 360.

gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.... He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn. 3:16, 18). “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (Jn. 5:24). “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. 5:8-9). If you believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ, then salvation is already your personal possession. As far as your standing before God is concerned, any further idea of purification for justification is completely wrong because it is unnecessary. It is in fact true that our personal progressive *sanctification* is still necessary; that true believers will grow in practical holiness because they have a new heart that loves and obeys Christ; but, this subjective holiness is never perfect or complete in this life and does not contribute one iota to our justification before God. All our self-righteousness is as filthy rags in God’s sight (Isa. 64:6; Phil. 3:7-11). Thus, we see that Halloween, even in its supposedly Christian form in our day, not only is full of superstitions and unbiblical practices but strikes at the very heart of the true gospel. It is rooted in a denial of the sufficiency of the cross of Christ and must therefore be repudiated by all Bible-believing Protestants.

## What Then Should We Do?

After noting the pagan and Roman Catholic origins and practices of Halloween, those believers who correctly conclude that we should not participate in our heathen culture’s reveling and abominable idolatry (cf. 1 Pet. 4:1-4) often ask: should we not offer a Christian alternative to Halloween? The answer to this question is no, if the alternative involves a Christian imitation of Halloween or setting up another holy day with church services and yearly traditions. The idea that we need to set up a more Christian friendly version of Halloween where the children dress up as angels and cowboys, shows not a spirit of Christian dominion but rather a church bowing to social pressure. There is only one set apart special holy day and that is the first day of the week or the Christian Sabbath. Moreover, if we turn Halloween into a recurring holy day with church services to honor Reformation Day, then we have fallen into the trap that corrupted the church and lead to a church calendar or liturgical year made up of human traditions. Remember that the Roman Catholic Church involved itself in syncretism by attempting to offer Christian alternatives to pagan holy days. We would do better to simply reject the whole affair altogether. If professing Christians took their children out of state or “public” schools where all this heathen and papal trash is promoted, they would not feel the peer pressure to celebrate witchcraft, necromancy, sorcery, death and the occult and treat such things as inconsequential or fun. Death is not a laughing matter. It is the punishment for sin. It is the judgment of God on all who rebel against Him and refuse to believe in Jesus Christ—His only begotten Son.

The godly Jews in the Old Testament did not set up their own alternative to heathen days honoring Baal, Asherah or Dagon. The Puritans and early Presbyterians did not offer Christian alternatives to pagan Celtic or Roman Catholic holy days. They abolished them all together and made them civil crimes. That is what Christian Reconstruction looks like. A pagan or corrupt Romanist law-order is destroyed and replaced with a Christian law-order. The modern Christian Reconstruction movement is far too pragmatic, ecumenical and bad on the first table of the law to actually implement a Christian law-order. They apparently do not want to go back to the covenanted reformation of the Presbyterians that produced the Westminster Standards. Instead, many of the leaders want to go back to the early ecumenical councils which would not exclude Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Arminians or Charismatics from citizenship in their version of a Christian nation. We would ask our brothers who identify themselves as theonomists or Christian Reconstructionists to repent on this issue and obey the moral law of God, which explicitly condemns James Jordan's position.

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[HOME PAGE](#)