

Halloween: The Real Story

We encourage parents to read this with their children, and to continue the important teaching of these subjects to children at home. Older children may be able to read this out loud, color the images, and discuss with parents or other trusted adults.



This is the story of Halloween.

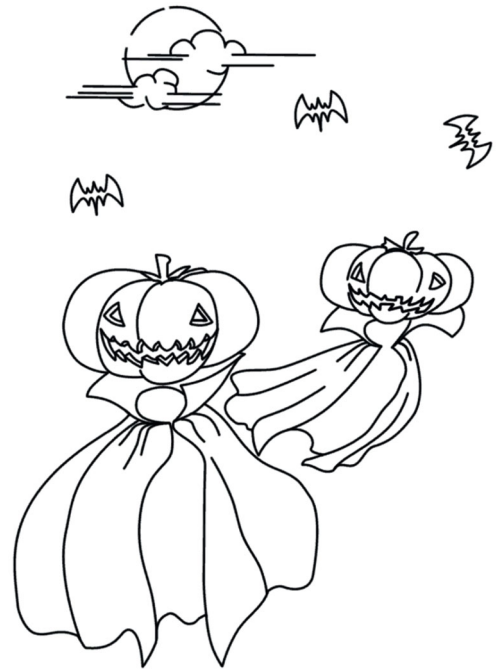
We're going to tell you how it all got started, what it really means, and what people who love God are supposed to do. Then, we'll let you decide what's right, and what's wrong. All of us have to decide for ourselves how we will act, and what we will do.

This story begins like many others with **"once upon a time, many, many years ago...**thousands of years, as a matter of fact.

Anyway, lots of years ago some people decided that they would rather be friends with the enemy of God, than with God Himself. Do you know who is the enemy of God? His name is Satan, or the Devil. He is our enemy, too. An enemy is someone who doesn't like you, someone who works against you instead of FOR you. An enemy seeks to hurt you, not help you. The Devil is our enemy, too.

These people believed that at the end of summer a god of death sent evil spirits to roam around and wander the earth. They dressed up in scary costumes to keep the spirits away from them. They thought if they wore something very scary, it would keep these spirits away.

People also used pumpkins and gourds and other things carved with scary faces to keep the evil spirits away. They would put a candle inside to light the face. People put these outside their homes on October 31. These became known as **Jack-O-Lanterns**. Today many people carve pumpkins with happy faces instead of scary ones. But this practice of carving pumpkins came from people who did not know God, or serve Him, like we do.



Later on, some people called Druids who worshipped the Devil, had a big ceremony every year to try to make this so-called god of death happy. They even killed each other during this ceremony. Many people make up their own gods to serve, instead of serving the One True God we know. Sometimes the Devil and his evil spirits pretend to be gods, and people serve them too. These fake gods would lead people away from the True God. This happened many years ago, and still happens today.



These kinds of ceremonies make God very unhappy. He is very sad when we follow other spirits, or do things that He tells us not to do. He tells us to stay far away from things like this. We might think they are harmless and fun, but He knows they can hurt us sometimes. He wants us to worship Him, and to be good and holy just like Him. And He will help us do that if we ask Him.

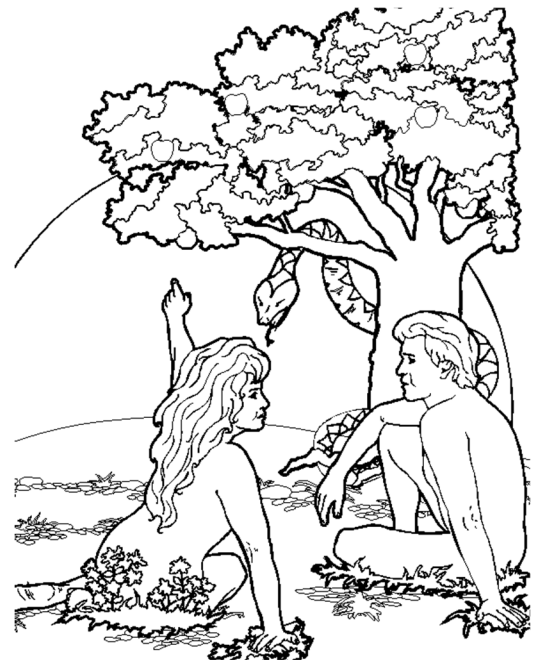
"Be my holy people. Be holy because I am holy. I am the Lord your God. Remember and obey my laws. I am the Lord, and I have made you holy." (Leviticus 20:7)

Many years later the people who loved God and Jesus decided they would try to get rid of this ceremony by making a special day to celebrate all the good things of God. They called this day **"All Hallow's Day" and it was on November 1.** "Hallow" means anything good and holy. You could call this day "All Good and Holy Things Day." They wanted to celebrate about good things, about God, and about God's holy people. The Bible calls God's people **"saints"** - that means good and holy. These people thought if they picked a day to celebrate God and good things, the other evil celebration would go away.

The night before November 1 is October 31. This was a special day for people who did not know God to do evil things and worship the Devil. Soon, this night was called **"All Hallow's Eve."** "Eve" means the day before something (Like Christmas Eve is the day before Christmas.) That's where the name "Halloween" comes from. If you say the words "All Hallow's Eve" fast, you can hear how it got to be called "Halloween."

Those people who love God know that there is a battle going on between good and evil. God is all things good and holy. The Devil is all things evil and bad. **This fight has been going on ever since Adam and Eve listened to the Devil instead of obeying God in the Garden.**

Some people are friends with the Devil. Some people are friends with God. You can't be friends with both. I will always choose to be God's friend. Will you?



It is hard to understand why some people would rather listen to the Devil than obey God. Maybe it is like it is for us when our friends and other people tempt us to do wrong things, instead of doing what we know God wants us to do.

Sometimes it is very hard to obey God and do right things but God promises rewards in heaven for those people who love Him and do right.

Some people, though, don't listen to God at all. In fact, they would rather listen to the Devil and worship him. They think the Devil can give them power and strength, but all the Devil can give them is death, and being away from God who is good. I would sure not want to be away from God who is all good things, would you?

So the people who loved the Devil decided to make October 31 the most important night of the year for them. They call this day the "Witches Sabbath" or "Black Sabbath." For them it is a time to worship the Devil, and to have terrible ceremonies that kill people, and are filled with evil and horrible things.

That is why Halloween became the night when we would see witches, goblins, evil things, black cats, and anything else scary and bad. All of these things make God very unhappy. He is very sad when His children do not listen to Him, and do not obey Him.



People who love God and Jesus are supposed to do things that make God happy, like obeying Him, loving each other, and setting a good example. **We should want to do good things, to make God happy.** He is a very good God, and gives us very good things. He wants us to love Him, and each other.

"You must love each other as I have loved you. All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other." (John 13:34b-35)

Some people like to think that Halloween isn't anything bad. They think that witches and ghosts and evil things are just for the fun of it. They even try to show us pictures of "nice" witches and ghosts, and other evil things that have "happy faces" on them.



Have you seen pictures showing "nice" ghosts and witches? This is a lie. Witches are not nice. We know that you can't make something evil into something nice, just by giving it a happy face.

It still stands for something evil - something that is not pleasing to God, and can be harmful to God's people.

It would be nice to pretend that evil things are just make believe, but as Christians we know that evil is real. God is good. God's enemy is the Devil. The Devil is evil, and very real - and very bad for us. God wants to give us a permanent and everlasting life of good things with Him in heaven, a very good place. That is why He sent His son Jesus to save us from the Devil. Not only are we saved, but we also have power in Jesus' Name!

"Jesus has the power of God. His power has given us everything we need to live and to serve God." (2 Peter 1:3a)

The Bible tells us the Devil is a liar, and a thief, and only wants to destroy us. He can make himself look good and tempting, like making evil things look "nice and friendly." God tells us not to have anything to do with him! He warns us over and over to obey Him, and stay away from evil.

**The big question now is, if we love God,
how can we do things that are evil?**

How can we take part in things that are supposed to honor the Devil? The answer is simple: **we can't!** Remember, we cannot be friends with the Devil, and be friends with God. If we are God's friend, we cannot do things that hurt Him. Things that honor the Devil make God very sad, and can lead us away from Him.

Remember how we talked earlier about people wearing costumes to scare off the evil spirits? They would dress like they thought the bad spirits looked, so the spirits would think they were one of them, and leave them alone. That's how we got the custom of wearing costumes on Halloween.



Over the years, the costumes have gotten worse and worse, giving honor to bad and evil things (like monsters, Dracula, witches and other things that are evil). Do you think that God likes for us to pretend we are something bad? I don't think so. It makes Him sad. People that do not love God still celebrate Halloween today by doing very sinful and evil things.



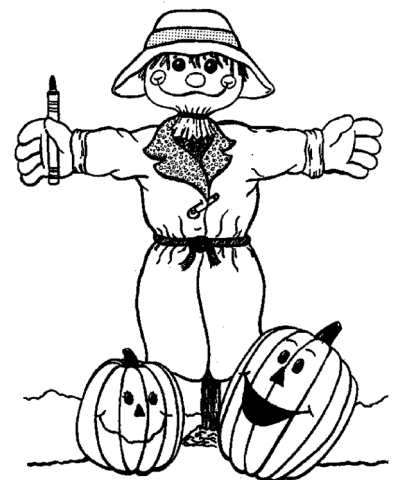
God does not want to see His children hurt by bad things, or want to be part of bad things. He tells us not to be part of the bad things the world does. He says He has "set us apart" from all of that. That means we are very special! God sets us apart from the world, and that means we don't do the same things the world does, and we don't think the same way the world thinks. We don't follow the enemy. We follow God.

"I have set you apart from other people. So you must be holy to me. This is because I am the Lord, and I am holy."
(Leviticus 20:26)

Just like the Christians many years ago, today people who love God must decide what to do on Halloween. It has become a "holiday" that almost everyone celebrates with ugly evil costumes and scary things. We see Halloween stuff everywhere we go. It seems the world really likes this holiday. Maybe that's because they don't really understand what is all about. Should we, those of us who love God, like this "holiday?"

It is very hard for Christians to live in a world that hates God and loves the enemy, the Devil. **We must each decide for ourselves how we are going to celebrate this day, and every other day, too!** God has promised us that if we obey Him, and do right things, He will reward us and make us happy. We should want to make God happy by obeying Him. Not just because we get a reward, but because we love God! He loves US so very much!

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)



Some churches, parents, and Christian schools try to help children understand about Halloween, and plan other activities that please God and do not harm His children. There are special parties, harvest festivals, worship services, prayer times, and other things that Christians can do together. These kinds of things make God happy, because it shows that His children want to do right things, and want to make Him happy.

Christians are outnumbered in the world by those who do not love God, and sometimes doing the right thing is very hard because so many other people think it is okay to do bad things.

But because we love God, and want to please Him, it is important for us to choose to do right. **That's right - we must choose for ourselves.** It is each person's choice to do what is right, or to do wrong. But sometimes we need the help of others who know more than we do, like our parents.

Parents have a big job teaching their children about the right things of God. It is a very big responsibility. The Bible tells parents that they must always teach about God, so that children can make right choices - choices that please God, and not make Him sad.

"The Lord is our God. He is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength. Always remember these commands I give you today. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and walk along the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up."
(Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

What about "Trick or Treating?" The part about **"Trick or Treat"** at Halloween got started many years ago, too. ***Do you really know what "Trick" or "Treat" means?*** It means that if a person doesn't give you treats (candy) you want, you can do tricks on him, and sometimes those tricks turn out to be very mean and harmful to others. Do you think that pleases God?



"Trick or Treat" sounds more like forcing or blackmailing people into doing or getting what you want! And that certainly does not please God, even if we think it is harmless. It began with evil intentions years ago.

Today, most people think that "Trick or Treating" is not something bad, because we really don't think we are forcing anyone to do anything. But because of the evil beginnings of this day, and the power the Devil and his evil spirits have in the world, sometimes people still do hurt others on this night, either by stupid and mean tricks, or even by more dangerous things.



We know that there is good and evil in the world. Good things come from God, and bad things come from the Devil. On Halloween, people try to scare others and make them afraid. We don't have to be afraid of bad things because God is all powerful. That means that people who love Him can be sure that He will always take care of them. Even if bad things happen to us, God will always be there to help us, and to keep us strong. He always has a reason for things that happen to us. He loves people who love Him and is always teaching them. Have you ever had a time when the biggest and best lessons you ever learned were maybe the hardest? Sometimes it is like that with God, but we never have to be afraid of anything because He is always there with us.

God does not want us to be afraid; He wants us to call on Him and trust Him all the time. God is much more powerful than the Devil. God is **MOST** powerful of all. There isn't anyone or anything that can even come close to our **ALL POWERFUL GOD!** The Devil will try to scare us, but as long as we love God, we are safe with Him.

"God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid. He gave us a spirit of power and love and self-control." (2 Timothy 1:7)

Do you understand now why Halloween is not a holiday that pleases God? Do you understand why Christians have a problem with this day?

It is sometimes hard for parents to make right decisions about what their children should do, because so many other people are celebrating Halloween, and parents don't want to disappoint their children. But parents are responsible for teaching and training their children to do right things, the things that please God. And God is watching parents and hoping they will teach good things, the things of God, to their children.

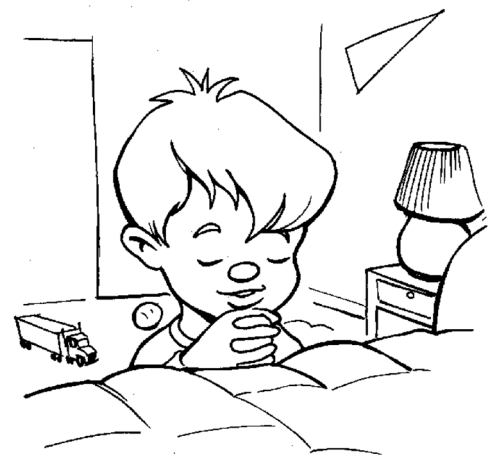
Instead of telling you what to do about Halloween, we would like to ask you to pray about it first. Ask God what would make Him happy. Ask Him to tell you what to do.

He will answer you by speaking in the "still, small voice" inside. That doesn't mean you will hear Him speak to you in a voice you can hear with your ears, but it means that the Holy Spirit will help guide you into doing the right thing. If you have prayed about it first, and you really want to please God, then you don't have to worry about it. God knows what is inside our hearts. He knows when we want to do right things to please Him.



"My brothers (this means sisters, too!), God called you and chose you to be His. Try hard to show that you really are God's chosen people. If you do all these things, you will never fail. And you will be given a very great welcome into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That kingdom continues forever."

(2 Peter 1:10-11)



Well, that's the story. If you still have questions about Halloween, ask your parents, your Sunday School teachers, or your pastor. They will help you understand, and help you do what pleases God. **And don't forget to ask God about it first!**

Try reading in your own Bible about times when God's people had to make choices to either follow Him, or the enemy.

Read about Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6). Read about his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were thrown into a fiery furnace (Daniel 3).



How about Noah, who built an ark and listened to God even though everyone told him he was crazy? (Genesis 6-9)

Think about David, when he was facing the huge giant Goliath (1 Samuel 17).



The Bible is filled with stories of real people who believed God, loved Him, trusted Him to take care of them, even when the world tried to get them to do bad things. They made a choice to be God's friend.

The most important thing you can do in your whole life is to believe in Jesus, trust and love God, and let the Holy Spirit show you how to live a good life that will be rewarded someday with life forever in heaven!

Don't let the world fool you into doing wrong things. Stand up and be counted on God's side! Be a friend to God. God is definitely YOUR friend.

