

## Holy Days, Holidays, and Halloween

Questions often arise among believers concerning the **observance of holidays** and the customs surrounding them. In seeking the answers to these questions, let's go to the word of God, which is our only rule of faith and practice.

God instituted many **holy days** (feasts) for Israel. The Passover, Pentecost, and Day of Atonement are some of the seven holy days instituted. In Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16, we see God's five-fold purpose for these holy days:

1. **Public worship** – *“an holy convocation...a solemn assembly”*
2. **Rest from labor** – *“ye shall do no servile work therein”*
3. **Reflecting and remembering** – *“and thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt”*
4. **Rejoicing with family and friends** – *“and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast...thy son...thy daughter...thy manservant...thy maidservant ...the Levite...stranger...fatherless...widow that are within thy gates”*
5. **Revealing Christ** – *“a shadow of things to come”* (Col. 2:17)

In addition to the holy days, there were the weekly sabbaths and the monthly observance new moons. God's people instituted other holy days so that they would remember God's deliverance. These holy days include the Feast of Purim (Esther 9:20-28) and the Feast of Dedication (Hanukah) (John 10:22).

In the **New Testament** no holy days are commanded for the Christian believer. Whether we observe a holy day (or holiday, as we call them) is a matter of **Christian liberty**. *“Let no man...judge you in meat...in drink... in respect of an holy day...the new moon or...the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come”* (Colossians 2:16, 17). Every believer must prayerfully decide if he will celebrate a holiday. *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”* (Romans 14:5). However, **we do not have liberty to be sinful**. *“For, brethren...use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh”* (Galatians 5:13).

Concerning Christmas, Easter, and other holidays, we must individually decide if we will observe them or not. In doing so, consider the origin, current practices, and redeeming values (if any) of the holiday. One might observe the good parts, yet must reject the bad. An example is Christmas. It is good to rejoice in Christ's birth, but it is bad to tell children lies about Santa Claus.

Now to Halloween. Can a Christian observe it in good conscience with both secular and religious authorities agreeing that its root is unmistakably pagan? The celebration of Halloween is a 2,000-year-old Celtic tradition in which Druid priests led the people in observing their New Year with occultic practices. Later, the Roman Catholic Church merged their unscriptural All Saint's Day (All Hallow's Day) with the practices already in place. The day prior to All Saint's Day was called “All Hallow's Eve,” later shortened to “Hallowe'en.” I find nothing Biblical about this holiday, nor do I find anything pure and worthy about its observance. We have watched through the years that its evil roots are bringing forth more and more practices that are overtly occultic and violent. Even many non-Christian citizens are abstaining from observing it. How much more should believers condemn Halloween and abhor it as evil!

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