

Halloween & Reformation Day Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Today is October 31, a day in which both a very significant event is remembered and a cultural holiday is celebrated. I want to take the opportunity today to address both Reformation Day and Halloween. There is not any obvious relationship between the two except sharing the same day of the year, but there is an underlying relationship which I will explain when I talk about the Reformation observance, but first I want to talk about Halloween which is the older of the two.

The Historical Background of Halloween

Halloween celebrations have changed over the centuries and it varies from country to country, so do not confuse practices here for either what occurred in history or what happens in other societies.

Halloween observances find their origin in the pagan practices of the religion of the Celts who lived in Ireland, Britain, Scotland and France (Gaul). Their priestly cast, the Druids, passed down the practices of their religious rites orally, so what little that is known is pieced together from various artifacts, early Roman visitors to the region, and from the Irish Druids where a small amount of information was written.

Among Druid celebrations was a festival to their god of the dead, Samhain, which was celebrated on the first day of their new year - our November 1. This was the end of the harvest and the beginning of the cold & dark of Winter. The most significant part of the celebration occurred on the night before the new year began - our October 31.

The Druids believed that corresponding to this event the veil between the living and the dead was thin or open and the spirits of those who had died the previous year were able to come back and walk among the living. Many of their rituals were related to dealing with these dead souls and taking advantage of the opening in the veil between the living and the dead. Many of the practices still carried out today are related to those rituals. Trick or treat is related to the food that was left out to appease these dead spirits and the practice of dressing in costume was to fool any spirits that might have been looking for you. Generally, it was considered that the more hideous the costume the better chance of not being recognized by a spirit. Bonfires were built to keep both these spirits and witches (from 'wicca' meaning "wise ones" or "female magicians") from coming near. Practices such as apple bobbing, "snap apple," throwing apple peels over the shoulder and roasting nuts were all related to divinations to tell the future.

The most horrible practice during this festival were the sacrifices made for both divination purposes and to appease their gods and gain their favor. Sacrifices were made of both animals and humans. Most often the human killed would be a criminal, but captured enemies, volunteers and kidnap victims were also used. Four different methods of killing the individual could be used corresponding to the purpose and to which one of the gods the individual was being sacrificed. I will not describe these except to say that they were gruesome and the divination was based on how the person reacted as they died. Caesar said, "*They believe that human life must be rendered for human life if the divinity of the immortal gods is to be appeased.*" Cannibalism was also practiced apparently for medical and cultic purposes.

How did all this get transferred into "Halloween?" Rome conquered the Celts in the first and second centuries. While Rome suppressed some of the practice of the Druids, such as human sacrifices, the real effect was a mixing of the two pagan religions with some of the Celtic gods becoming confused with Roman gods. Christianity became the official religion of the empire in the Fourth Century and

syncretism began to develop within the church. On May 13, 609 or 610, Pope Boniface IV dedicated the Pantheon at Rome to the "*Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs*" which replaced "Feralia," the pagan festival of the dead that had been previously practiced. Part of the festivity in remembering the Christian martyrs included a pageant where people would dress up as one of these departed "saints" and some as the devil. Pope Gregory III (d. 741) shifted this to November 1 as a day to commemorate "All Saints" that had died. Pope Gregory IV in 835 established November 1 for the universal observance of the "Feast of All Saints" and November 2 as "All Souls' Day" to honor the souls of the dead, especially those who had died the previous year. Another name for All Saints Day was "All Hallows Day" and the night prior is "All Hallows Eve" which is shortened to "Halloween."

This was another case in which the church tried to change a pagan custom by substituting a quasi-Christian celebration for it. The end result was a pagan hybrid as seen in the fact that as late as the 17th century it was said in France that, "*the greater part of the priests are witches.*" Many of these hybrid rituals came to America with the various immigrant groups. The practices of Halloween specifically coming from Scottish and Irish immigrants whose culture had the strongest influence by the ancient Druid customs.

The celebration of Halloween in the U.S. has changed over the last century. In the early 1900's it had been a much more serious affair by those who celebrated it. There was also much mischief associated with it. Some of the mischief was relatively harmless such as putting a carriage on top of a house. Some of it was harmful such as breaking windows and setting fires. Halloween became more commercialized during the 1950's & 60's and the celebration quieted down into harvest parties and children in cute costumes collecting candy. That was the world I grew up in. There was an occasional horror movie character such as Dracula, Frankenstein's monster or perhaps a skeleton or ghost - a white sheet with some eye holes cut in it - but most kids were some kind of comic book hero, a clown, assorted zoo animals, a princess or soldier. Trick or treat was door-to-door in your neighborhood and it was not unusual to be invited into a home for hot apple juice, cup-cakes or other baked goods.

Sinister elements began to return in the 1970's as reports of treats sabotaged with razor blades, needles or drugs curtailed accepting a homemade treat or fruit, going into the home of anyone you did not know very well, and carefully screening all candy. As the decades passed, going door-to-door in many neighborhoods was replaced with going to the mall or a "trunk or treat" in a parking lot. Costumes became more ghoulish and Halloween parties took on more sinister and evil elements. Adult parties are now often highly sexualized and many will include occultic elements due to the increasing interest in our society in such practices. While Halloween remains fun and games for many, it is a very serious affair for others. This is related to the return and rise of various pagan groups for whom Halloween is one of their "holy" days in the worship of nature, Satan and the demonic. Judging the importance of a holiday by the length of time of preparations, home displays and amount of money spent, Halloween is second only to Christmas.

Responding to Halloween

I want to give you two Biblical principles and three suggestions on how to respond properly to Halloween.

The First Principle is found in Deuteronomy 18:9-14 in which God warns the generation that is about to enter into the Promised Land that they should not get involved with the religious practices of the people that they are going to conquer. ⁹ "*When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.* ¹⁰ "*There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,* ¹¹ *or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.* ¹² "*For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you.* ¹³

“You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.”¹⁴ “For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you [to do] so.

This strong warning was given because 1) these were reason these nations were going to be destroyed, and 2) these things are real - divination, witchcraft, omen interpretation, sorcery, casting spells, being a medium or spiritist. Similar warnings against occultic practices are given in the New Testament (sorcery in Gal. 5:19-20). God wants to protect His people from it. Ouija, fantasy games, seances and many more are depicted as fun and games for Halloween, but they all invoke demonic activity. It is safer for your children to play with real guns than with such demonic stuff.

The Second Principle is that true Christianity results in a change of character in the individual. Acts 26:17-18 records the Apostle Paul’s commission to go to the Gentiles was *“to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”* That is exactly what happened. Acts 19:18-19 records that when the Ephesians were saved they responded by *“coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of all; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.”* Similar changes are noted throughout the New Testament in those who are saved. It would be against a Christian’s very character to knowingly be involved in what is demonic.

Based on these two principles here are three suggestions on how to respond to Halloween.

1) Non-participation. Avoiding it may be the easiest thing to do. This would be required of those that have a conviction that anything associated with Halloween would be evil, since it would be a sin to violate the conscience (Romans 14:23). However, follow the principle of Romans 14 and refrain from condemning those that do participate in some sort of Halloween celebration.

2) Alternative celebration. Find something else fun to do that is not related to Halloween. Here are three ideas. *A Fall harvest party, which is what I did with my own family. *A costume party in which everyone dresses up as a Bible character. We have done that with children’s ministries so that it was also a gospel outreach. *Celebrate Reformation Day in honor of Martin Luther posting his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517 which started the reformation.

3) Godly involvement. Find a way to participate in some aspects of Halloween without being involved in anything occultic or violating any Biblical command or precept. Here are some ideas. 1) Hand out a good treat bag to trick-or-treaters that includes an appropriate gospel tract. 2) Dress up as a Bible character whether for a party or trick-or-treating so that you can tell others about your character either verbally or with a gospel tract that explains your character.

Whatever you decide to do remember that 1) there is to be a distinction between the lifestyle and behavior of a Christian and a non-Christian. 2) Make use of every opportunity to glorify God and spread the gospel, so try to find a way to do that if you do participate in a Halloween activity or some alternative. I pray you will do that not just today, tonight, and on holidays, but every day. (See: <https://gracebibleny.org/a-christian-response-to-halloween>).

Reformation Day (See: <https://gracebibleny.org/our-reformation-heritage>)

October 31 is also a significant date because in 1517 Martin Luther used it to invite a public discussion at the well attended *All Saints Day* feast that would occur the next day. The disputation that Martin Luther, a priest and a professor at the University of Wittenberg, Germany, posted on the door of the Wittenburg church was an invitation for a public discussion on the abuse of the practice of indulgences and its consequential appearance of offering salvation by the means of a payment of money. The church door served as a public bulletin board, and discussion of a disputation was a normal way for academics to deal with issues. The notice was written in Latin and entitled, *Disputation Of Dr. Martin*

Luther Concerning Penitence And Indulgences. It contained 95 Theses or points that were to be discussed. The document did not condemn indulgences, but only the manner in which it was being practiced. It even defended the Pope believing he would also condemn those practices. It did not contain any of the great doctrines that would arise later, though the seeds of those ideas were present. No one accepted the challenge and no discussion took place the next day. However, the document was copied, translated, printed and distributed throughout Germany and Europe in only a few weeks.

The reaction was quite strong. Opposing Luther's Theses were the church hierarchy, the monastic orders, especially the Dominicans, and the champions of scholastic theology and traditional Roman Catholic orthodoxy. The chief writers were Tetzl of Leipzig, Conrad Wimpina of Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, and John Eck of Ingolstadt who had formerly been Luther's friend. Each represented a different university.

In favor of Luther's Theses were liberal scholars, German patriots and all the ordinary Christians waiting for someone to express their own desires for a pure, scriptural, and spiritual religion and vent their indignation against existing abuses. Dr. Fleck exclaimed, "*Ho, ho! the man has come who will do the thing.*" Luther's posting unintentionally lit the fires of the Reformation. October 31 became celebrated as Reformation Day and the Sunday prior as a day for it to be remembered in certain Reformed denominations.

Though this local church is independent and does not belong to one of those denominations, our theological heritage is solidly founded in the Reformation. This church would not exist if it had not been for those men that God used throughout history to preserve His word and proclaim its truth. As Melancthon expressed in hindsight about the importance of the Reformation, "*Christ and the Apostles were brought out again as from the darkness and filth of prison.*" The Reformation freed the truth of the Scriptures.

For the remainder of this morning I want to give you a brief outline of church history so that you understand the importance of the Reformation, and then conclude with a brief explanation of the five key doctrines that were revived by the Reformation upon which we also stand.

A Brief Church History

The Early Church was the period of the greatest purity in the church and even then there were serious problems as attested by the many admonitions and warnings given in the various epistles. Paul made many corrections of false teaching in his letters, and Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude all warned against false teachers. Jesus had warned in the parable of the Tares in Matthew 13 that the false would be mixed in with those who were true and early church history bore that out. It is still true today so those warnings still apply.

Persecution of Christians began by the Jews soon after the Day of Pentecost (Acts 3). Rome began persecuting Christians by the early 60's under Nero and that continued until the Edicts of Toleration in A.D. 311 & 313. Persecution had helped keep the church pure because few are willing to suffer for something they do not really believe.

Constantine the Great (306-337) made great changes in the Roman Empire. He had converted to Christianity and allowed his subjects to choose their religion according to the dictates of their own conscience but he favored Christianity. That resulted in some people seeking to be a part of the church for political reasons instead of spiritual ones. **Theodosius the Great** (383-395) made Christianity the official religion to the exclusion of every other and punished those that did not follow its orthodox practice as a crime against the state. The church has never done well when the state controls or influences it. The church became filled with people who made false professions and went through the religious rituals to escape persecution. Church leadership positions became sought after for their political value instead of as positions in the service of Christ and His people. Church doctrine and practice quickly became compromised.

After the early church period, the term Bishop (ἐπισκοπή / episkopê) became a title for someone who had authority over the churches in a geographical region instead of simply the describing the responsibility of a man who has the position of an elder (πρεσβύτερος / presbuteros - Titus 1:5) and who pastors (ποιμαίνω / poimainô) the flock of people God has entrusted to him (Acts 20:17, 28). When Christianity became the religion of the state, the Bishop also gained a controlling influence in political and civil affairs. Each major city would have a Bishop and as time went on certain of these Bishops gained greater influence over other Bishops and their territories. This eventually led to the development of the **Roman Catholic Church**. By the Fifth century, the most influential Bishops were those of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem with the first two the most powerful. Innocent I (402–417) claimed that nothing in the Christian world should be decided without his formal knowledge and that all Bishops should turn to him, especially in matters of faith. Other leading Bishops, also called patriarchs, resisted such claims. Rome continues to claim superiority to this day.

By the ninth Century, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church separated from each other with an incurable antagonism between the Bishop of Rome and Patriarch of Constantinople. 187 years of mutual anathemas culminated in 1054 with a final schism with each side excommunicating the other.

The Roman Catholic Church developed many non-Biblical doctrines over the centuries as authority shifted from the Scriptures to its councils, magistrates and eventually to the Pope. Doctrine and practice in the Roman Catholic Church have tended to develop slowly, become entrenched and then declared official doctrine. An example is the rise of the authority of the church over the Bible.

Roman Catholic pastors started being called priests and then began to distinguish themselves from laymen by dressing differently starting about 500. The title of pope was first given to Boniface III in 607. Kissing the pope's foot about 100 years later. Required celibacy among the clergy varied with different popes until 1079 when it became official doctrine under pope Gregory VII. In 1215 the Lateran Council decreed confession of sins were to be made to a priest instead of to God. In 1864 the Vatican Council condemned freedom of religion, conscience, speech, press and scientific discoveries disapproved by the Roman Church. It also asserted the pope's temporal authority over all civil rulers. In 1870, the Vatican Council added the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals when speaking ex cathedra.

The rise of authority of Roman Catholic clergy was accompanied by its diminished view of the Scriptures themselves. In 1229, the Council of Valencia placed the Bible itself on the list of books forbidden to laymen. That was changed with Vatican II which allowed lay people to have Bibles though it could only be interpreted by the church. I still remember as a child when that happened and one of our Catholic neighbors was excited to finally be allowed to have a Bible.

Indulgences, the flash point of the reformation, were tied to the idea of penance in gaining remission of sins. The idea was developed by the scholastics in the middle ages and by 1184 it was approved to sell them. By Martin Luther's time, it became tied to the pope's authority to dispense the extra-merits and rewards accrued to the church by supererogation. It also became further twisted in applying them to those who had already died, and so it became a path of salvation for loved ones in purgatory by means of a monetary exchange. The Council of Trent affirmed this doctrine in 1563.

The Council of Trent also pronounced more than 100 anathemas against anyone that differs with its decisions about official church dogma and practice which includes all the hallmark doctrines of the Reformers. In practical terms that means that everyone who believes that salvation is by God's grace alone through the atonement of Jesus Christ alone and applied by faith alone is under multiple official curses by the Roman Catholic Church.

While this extremely brief history makes it seem like there was no hope until the Reformation, God has always had a remnant that adhered to the truth of the gospel even when obscured by extraneous non-Biblical doctrines and practices. There have always been those that reject the lies of works based systems

for the glorious truth of salvation by God's grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is even true today of those raised within Roman Catholicism or other cults. It was while Luther was a monk at the Augustinian convent at Erfurt that the light of the gospel shined upon the darkness of his heart.

Throughout history there have been groups that have discerned and rejected false doctrine because they held fast to the Scriptures. Because the Roman Catholic Church generally persecuted such people and burned their writings we only know a little about them. An example is the Waldensians who sought to make the Scriptures known in the common language. It is estimated that in 1300 there was eighty thousand Waldensians in Austria alone. The Humiliati and probably the Arnoldists also held to an evangelical gospel. Even when the vast majority of people held to false gods and false gospels, God has always preserved a remnant of those with a true faith in Him.

Significant Reformers

The writings of Martin Luther became the flashpoint of the Reformation, but there were other significant reformers before him in the 14th and 15th centuries. Of particular importance were John Wyclif in England and John Huss in Bohemia.

John Wyclif (1324-1384) is called the Morning Star of the Reformation. It was said that he "*lit a fire which shall never be put out.*" He brought the Scriptures to bear on Catholic doctrine, translated the Scriptures into English, and laid down the principle of Scriptural authority above human authority. Itinerant evangelists who followed his teachings became known as the Lollards. His writings were carried to the continent and became known to **Jon Hus** (1369-1415) who became a professor at the University of Prague in Bohemia and a popular preacher. Hus became another great proponent of the Scriptures and its authority resulting in also speaking against many non-Biblical Roman Catholic doctrines and practices. This eventually led to the Roman Catholic Church condemning him as a heretic just as it had done to Wyclif. Though promised safe conduct by Emperor Sigmund, he was burned at the stake July 6, 1415.

Luther has some familiarity with Hus' writings having read some of his sermons while in the monastery at Erfurt. He had greater familiarity with the character of Hus and his unjust martyrdom, a martyrdom that strengthened Charles V to keep his word in providing safe conduct unlike Sigmund.

Other 16th Century Reformers

Martin Luther ignited the fire of the Reformation with his 95 Theses and soon many stood with him in Germany including Elector Frederick the Wise and the civil authorities without whom he would have been martyred like Jon Hus. The ideas of the Reformation spread to other areas of Germany and beyond rather quickly. By 1527 the foundations of what would become the Lutheran state church were already laid in many areas. Lutheran doctrine spread resulting in Sweden and Finland, which was then a part of Sweden, adopting Lutheranism by 1529. Denmark along with its territories of Iceland and Norway adopted Lutheranism by 1537.

Huldreich Zwingli was a priest in Zurich, Switzerland. He began an orderly exposition of the Gospel of Matthew in 1519. He became familiar with Luther's writings and by 1522 he began a vigorous work of reformation in Switzerland under the conviction that only the Bible is binding on Christians. Things in Zurich changed rapidly. By 1525 Church jurisdiction was overthrown, Mass was abolished, services were in German, and the clergy could marry. This reformation swiftly spread to other Swiss cities.

Reformation ideas had spread into neighboring areas of France through the preaching of Guillaume Farel beginning in 1521. He became involved in the work in Geneva and asked a French acquaintance who was passing through, John Calvin, to stay and help. Calvin's work in the years that followed would define much of what would be known as Reformed Theology.

The reformation came to England through a convoluted path beginning with King Henry VIII establishing the Anglican church as a consequence of his quest to get rid of his wife and get a new one in the pursuit of gaining a male heir. Yet that opened the door to the Reformation and it could not be shut again even by bloody Mary. Translation of the Bible into English by William Tyndale loosened and broke the State's grip on people's religious faith.

Though secular historians will usually stress the political intrigue and wars fought as the causes for various areas becoming Lutheran or Reformed, God's providence moves forward irregardless of the motivations of men good or wicked. We must thank God for His mercy in bringing about the events of the 16th Century which restored the gospel to Western Civilization.

The Great Theological Divide

The Reformation did not begin as an effort to split up Christianity and create new churches. The goal was to correct the errors and reform the church back into conformity to the Scriptures. As the essential doctrines of the Reformation became clearly defined, it became painfully obvious that there could not be reconciliation between those who hold such diametrically opposed beliefs. As 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 describes, *"for what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?"*

The great doctrines from the reformation are usually described in five Latin phrases as follows:

Sola scriptura - by Scripture alone. This is the hallmark of the Reformation and the presumptive basis for all reformation doctrine. Only the Bible is God breathed and so is the only authoritative source for Christian doctrine and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is to be accessible to all, and a proper understanding of it comes from the Holy Spirit and not on one's own interpretation (2 Peter 1:19-21). Sola Scriptura was in complete opposition to the authority of church tradition, the magisterium, and especially the pope. (See:

<https://gracebibleny.org/our-reformation-heritage-sola-scriptura-scripture-alone>)

Sola fide - by faith alone. This was the central doctrinal issue for Martin Luther and other reformers and so it is sometimes referred to as the material cause of the reformation. Romans 4:5, *"But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness,"* Sola fide can be summarized with the formula *"Faith yields justification and good works"* in opposition to the Roman Catholic formula *"Faith and good works yield justification."* These two formulas cannot be reconciled. (See:

<https://gracebibleny.org/our-reformation-heritage-sola-fide-faith-alone>).

Sola gratia - by grace alone. Grace is "unmerited favor." This doctrine places the emphasis on God as the sole source of grace and opposes the Roman Catholic doctrine that grace is dispensed by the church through its sacraments which would be merited favor and not grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 summarizes this doctrine well. ⁸ *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."* (See:

<https://gracebibleny.org/reformation-heritage-sola-gratia-grace-alone>)

Solus Christus or **Solo Christo** - through Christ alone.

Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man and there is salvation through no other just as Peter proclaimed to the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:12. Jesus' sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for the forgiveness of sin, our justification and reconciliation to the Father. This is directly against Roman Catholicism and other groups in which a human priest is the mediator that grants forgiveness of sin to the penitent. A key scripture is 1 Timothy 2:5-6, *"For there is one God, [and] one mediator also between God and men, [the] man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all."*

(See: <https://gracebibleny.org/our-reformation-heritage-solus-christus-christ-alone>)

Soli Deo gloria - for the glory of God alone. This was the ultimate purpose of the Reformation. Man had exalted himself over God's word and God's means of salvation by His grace through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man even exalted himself to be the recipients of prayers and veneration. This doctrine was against the exaltation of people such as the pope, Mary and the "saints." All glory is to be due to God and God alone. Even when humans do commendable good works, the praise and glory should be directed to God who created them and enabled them to do those things. Psalm 115:1, "*Not to us, O Lord, not to us, But to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth.*" (See: <https://gracebibleny.org/soli-deo-gloria-the-glory-of-god-through-ordinary-lives> and <https://gracebibleny.org/soli-deo-gloria-and-thankfulness>)

These doctrines are the core beliefs of the Reformation and each is incorporated into the doctrinal statement of this church.

The Continuing Reformation

The Reformation released the gospel from its prison and laid the foundation upon which others have built since the 16th Century. It is with no disrespect that we point out that the early reformers did not go far enough in their break from Roman Catholicism for they held onto some of its doctrines and practices. It is difficult to break away from the beliefs and practices of your forefathers and ingrained in you since a child, yet these men did so. However, it would be to those that followed them to continue the work in examining beliefs and practices by the Scriptures and changing them accordingly. That is all we are striving to do. We walk in the footsteps of Wyclif, Hus and Luther who humbly, but firmly stood on the Scriptures as the Word of God. They studied it so their conscience would be permeated by it and would proclaim its truth boldly, yet would humbly subject themselves to change their view if shown by the Scriptures they were wrong. To paraphrase Luther, we are to strive to be conquered by the Holy Scriptures and have our conscience bound in the word of God.

The Roman Catholic Church had become infused with the musings of men which replaced the authority of God's word. Halloween is an example of the sycretism in the Roman Catholic Church in which pagan practices were repackaged with Christian terminology. The Reformation restored the recognition that God and His word are supreme. Of the two celebrations that occur on October 31, the Reformation is the important one for Biblical Christians. Keep that in mind whatever you do today in relationship to the cultural holiday of Halloween.

THE CAMBRIDGE DECLARATION

<http://www.monergism.com/The%20Cambridge%20Declaration.pdf>

<http://www.fivesolas.com/5solas.htm>

Sermon Notes - 10/31/2021
Halloween & Reformation Day - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

The Historical Background of Halloween

Halloween observances find their origin in the pagan practices of the religion of the _____
The _____ festival to their god of the dead was Oct. 31 believing the veil between living & dead was thin
Druid rituals included leaving food out, dressing in _____, divination, & sacrifices of animals & humans
Rome conquered the Celts in 1st & 2nd centuries resulting in a _____ of the two pagan religions
Pope Gregory IV established Nov. 1 as All Saints (Hallows) Day. Halloween is short for _____
Roman Catholic syncretism in former Celtic areas incorporated some _____ rituals in their own practices
Halloween in the U.S.A. has varied over time and has been becoming more _____ since the 1970's

Responding to Halloween

First Principle: Do not participate in the _____ practices of pagans - sorcery, divination, spiritism, etc.
Second Principle: Becoming a Christian _____ your character & practices. Christians avoid the demonic
Possible Proper Responses to Halloween include: 1) Non-participation - _____ it completely
2) An alternative celebration. Examples: _____ Party, Bible Character Costume Party, Reformation Day
3) Godly Involvement: Examples: Trick or Treat gospel tracts. _____ "trick or treat." Be a Bible character
There is to be a _____ between Christians & non-Christians. Glorify God in all that you do

Reformation Day

October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his disputation inviting _____ discussion at the All Saints Day feast
He had 95 Theses (points) for _____ about Penitence & Indulgences - no one debated it the next day
It was copied, translated, printed & _____ leading to strong reactions pro & con throughout Europe
It was the _____ spark that lit the fires of the Reformation, and so it is a day to remember & celebrate

A Brief Church History

The Early Church was the period of greatest _____, yet even then there were false teachers & false doctrines
From Pentecost to the Edicts of Toleration (311, 313), _____ helped keep the church pure
Constantine the Great (306-337) brought toleration & _____ to Christianity - and political influence entered it
Theodosius the Great (383-395) made Christianity the official religion and church positions became _____
After the early church period, the term Bishop began to refer to a man with authority over _____ churches
When Bishops gained also influence over political & civil affairs, competition arose to gain more _____
Antagonism between the Bishop of Rome & the Patriarch of Constantinople finally resulted in a _____ (1054)
The RCC developed many non-Biblical doctrines as authority shifted from the Bible to church _____
Various councils established un-Biblical & _____ doctrines as the official beliefs / teachings of the RCC
Indulgences (man granting God's forgiveness) began to be sold by 1184 - you could _____ salvation
The Council of Trent affirmed indulgences and pronounced _____ on belief in Reformation Doctrines

God has always preserved a _____ of true believers - even within heretical “churches”

Significant Reformers / National Reformations

John Wyclif (1324-1384) the Morning Star of the Reformation. Scriptural authority, _____, evangelism

Jon Hus (1369-1415) followed in Wyclif’s footsteps and the _____ returned to Moravia and spread

Martin Luther (1483-1546) re-established Scriptural authority and _____ in Christ as basis of salvation

The _____ Reformation - Huldreich Zwingli & John Calvin

The English & _____ Reformations - William Tyndale, John Knox

The Great Theological Divide

The essential doctrines of the Reformation are _____ to the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church

Sola scriptura - by Scripture alone. The _____ of the Reformation (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Sola fide - by faith alone. The _____ doctrine of the Reformation (Romans 4:5)

Sola gratia - by grace alone. God as its sole _____ (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Solus Christus - through Christ alone. There is no other _____ between God & man (1 Tim. 2:5-6)

Soli Deo gloria - for the glory of God alone. Psalm 115:1

The Continuing Reformation

The Reformation released the gospel from its prison and laid the _____ upon which others have built

We walk in the footsteps of the Reformers as we study God’s word so that our consciences are _____ by it

The RCC (and other churches) is infused with the _____ of men that have replaced with word of God

Halloween in an example of religious _____ - pagan practices repackaged with Christian terminology

The Reformation restored the recognition that God and His Word are _____

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help. **Young Children**

- draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch.

Older Children - 1) Count how many times the word “Halloween” is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about the origin of Halloween and what would be a proper way for your family to respond to it.

THINK ABOUT IT! - Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What is the pagan origin of Halloween? How did it become incorporated into Christian societies? How have Halloween celebrations changed in the USA in last century? What primary principles should guide Christians in responding to secular celebrations? What are some proper ways to respond to Halloween? What is your own response to it? Why did Martin Luther post his disputation on the church door on October 31? What did he hope to do? Why did it spark the Reformation? How did tolerance & government favor corrupt the church? How did the Roman Catholic Church develop? Why is it so subject to syncretism and false doctrine? Historically trace God’s preservation of a remnant? What is the importance of John Wyclif & Jon Hus to the Reformation? Martin Luther sparked the Reformation - how did it spread to other nations? Name the key men instrumental in its spread and defining its doctrine. Can Protestants and Roman Catholics be reconciled into one church? Why or why not? Name the five core doctrines of the reformation and their significance? What was the basis of the Reformation and how has it continued to progress since the 16th century? Why should Reformation Day be much more important to Christians than Halloween?