

The Origins of Halloween and Noah's Flood

Many theologians and church historians are aware of the significance of Halloween; but unfortunately, the average American child celebrates the holiday totally oblivious to its great importance in God's dealings with man.

October 31st, Halloween—meaning hallowed or sacred evening—is the day that Noah boarded the ark and the great flood came upon the earth to destroy the first world. One year and 10 days later, Noah left the ark on Mount Ararat.

All around the world, ancient cultures from China to the South American celebrated October 31st as both a New Year day and a day to remember the dead. Since the date is so universally celebrated, these traditions may have originated from the oral traditions passed down by Noah to his descendants. Since the great flood was such an awesome event, the ancient peoples memorialized the day even as modern Americans have memorialized D-day, Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, etc. The most complete collection of these flood legends from all over the world is contained in Richard Andree's German work Die Flutsagen and James Grazer's Folklore in the Old Testament.

The Bible verifies these ancient flood traditions as being accurate. In Genesis 7:11 the Scriptures state that the flood came on the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month. The first month in the Biblical Hebrew agricultural calendar is September (Exodus 34:22). Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is celebrated in mid-September. The second month begins on about October 14th, and seventeen days hence is October 31st. Although the modern Jewish New Year falls on a different day in September every year, the ancient Hebrew calendar appears to place October 31 as the date of the great flood.

According to Biblical chronology the great flood took place in about 2517 BC. Over the passing years the origins of the Hallowed Eve have been either forgotten or distorted. Such was the case in the English people who descended from Noah's son Japheth and grandson Gomer. The ancient English Druid priest would celebrate October 31st by pulling down and rebuilding the roof of their temple as a symbol of the destruction and renovation of the world. To remember the dead, the people were instructed to place an offering of food on the graves of departed loved ones. The people could not keep the poor children in the towns from disguising themselves and stealing the food off the graves. This custom has evolved into the American practice of Trick or Treat.

October 31st is also associated with the Roman Catholic "All Saints Day." In the year 607 AD the Roman Emperor presented to the pope the Roman Pantheon. Originally this building was dedicated to Jupiter. The pope cleansed it and dedicated it to the service of God on May 13th. At the dedication the bones of the martyrs from the various cemeteries were paraded through the city. This yearly celebration became popularized throughout the Western Church and in 835 the pope made it an official church holy day and moved it to Nov. 1. The date was moved for two reasons: 1) The convenience of celebrating after the harvest 2) The Roman pagans already celebrated the 1st of November as a pagan holiday to remember the dead. The Catholic Church was quick to Christianize Pagan holidays. This is why we celebrate the Birth of Jesus on December 25, the day the Romans celebrated the winter solstice. The Roman Church probably did not realize at the time that the pagan celebration of October 31st was once rooted in a Biblical event.

The history of Halloween illustrates for us the words of the Apostle Paul,

"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

The Christian view of Anthropology is one of man's gradual evolutions downward into darkness. Through sin, the ancient cultures of the world disregarded the truth of God and His works. It is no wonder that Paul found a statute on the Areopagus in Athens with this inscription, "To the Unknown God." It is also significant that the Spirit of the Lord guided the Apostle Peter to specifically point out the Great Flood as a historical event that the world refuses to acknowledge. Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:5-6, "It escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water." How true this is! For not only does the scholarship of the world disbelieve the record of the flood, the day of the event has also escaped their notice. It is incumbent upon God's people to bring the world back to the truth concerning October 31st. Halloween may be taken as the devil's holiday, but the day actually belongs to God.

Halloween should remind everyone of the holiness of God in judging sinners and the grace of God in saving a righteous man Noah and his family. October 31 is a stern reminder; for the Great Flood is a foreshadowing of even a greater day of judgment and deliverance – the coming of Christ!

For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:38-39)

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