"Examining Halloween"

"…God demonstrates His Own Love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!
Since we have now been Justified by His Blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him..." **Romans 5:8-9**

In the early 1900s, the migrating Irish and Scots brought Halloween traditions to the United States, but many researchers claim that the holiday can be traced back about 2,000 years to the Celts of Europe, who occupied parts of Ireland, the United Kingdom, and northern France. It was a Pagan festival called **"Samhain"** (pronounced *"sow-in"*) that celebrated more or less the honor of the dead and involved the offering of large sacrifices of animals.

It is VERY important to note, that although NO ORIGINAL written accounts of this festival exist today from the Ancient Celts, there is some LIMITED reference to it in Roman records from when the Romans conquered Celtic lands around 43AD. Under Roman rule, the day of Samhain was influenced by Roman festivals of the time. The first was called *"Pomona,"* which was a type of harvest festival, and the next was *"Feralia"* - the Roman Day of The Dead. Interestingly, both Feralia and Samhain were festivals of the dead and celebrated at the end of October.

Around 600AD, **Pope Boniface IV** created **All Saints' Day**, and **Pope Gregory III** later moved this holiday to November 1st in an effort to give a Christian alternative to this Pagan celebration. Christians who did not want to celebrate Pagan festivals celebrated something of positive spiritual value—in this case honoring the saints and martyrs. With the overwhelming expansion of Christianity in Europe, All Saint's Day became the dominant holiday.

In fact, the current name of "Halloween" originates from the day before All Saint's Day, which was called *"All Hallow Evening"*; this name was shortened to *"All Hallows Eve"* The name changed over time and became *"Hallowe'en."*

A couple hundred years later, the Roman Church made November 2nd *"All Souls Day"* to honor the dead. This was influenced by the continued persistence of The Day of The Dead by the Ancient Irish, Scots, and others in Europe. Standing against this, many Protestant Christians chose to celebrate October 31st as *Reformation Day* in honor of Reformers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others who spear-headed the Reformation in the 1500s.

The practice known today as *"Trick-or-Treating"* comes from most "Day of The Dead Festivals", in which, townsmen went door to door asking for food and other donations to help celebrate in the respective festivals. Those who chose NOT to give, had their doors marked as a sign to show their non-support. Those homes were typically vandalized in some form on days following the festival.

So, the burning question becomes clear: Should Christians "celebrate" Halloween? My answer would depend upon how you define a "celebration", YOUR OWN personal relationship with Jesus Christ and your orientation the knowledge of His Grace! If you believe this is somehow disrespectful to that relationship, then you should refrain from the tradition of Halloween. If you are grounded in the FREEDOM that Christ gives us, then you will live your life WITHOUT the condemnation of what you choose to do on Halloween!

"…There is now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus…." **Romans 8:1**

Much Love,
Roc