

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

Thanks for watching and God Bless!

Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

The Al Denson Show
Box 220 Grapevine, TX 76099
Email: aldenson@aol.com
Web Site: www.aldenson.com

THE TRUTH ABOUT



HALLOWEEN



Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as “15 minutes of fame”. Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, “The Al Denson Show.” “You’ve got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport,” says Al. “This has all been so amazing. I can’t imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don’t have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, ‘I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.’ You can’t ask for anything more or better than that.”

Write Al at: Box 220 Grapevine, TX 76099
Email: aldenson@aol.com Web Site: www.aldenson.com

The Truth About HALLOWEEN

Responding to contemporary cultural issues can create confusion, frustration, and controversy for many sincere followers of Christ. It always seems as if there are as many different ideas and opinions as there are Christians. There is probably not a topic that has caused more disagreement among Christians than Halloween. For example:

- Some Christians believe Halloween to be a completely harmless holiday.
- Others believe Halloween is completely evil.
- Some Christians think that there is nothing wrong with limited participation, like allowing children to trick-or-treat, as long as their costumes are innocent and fun.
- Others really think you will go straight to hell if you allow your kids to trick-or-treat, regardless of what they wear.
- Some Christians don’t participate in Halloween at all, but have alternative parties for their children.
- Others believe strongly that Christians should stay completely away from the issue and not do anything, at all.

So, who is right? Of course in any matter regarding Christian living, the only voice that matters is the voice of God. There are no verses in the Bible which, specifically mention trick-or-treating, costumes, candy, or pumpkins, but there are two things we can do that will help us make

right choices about issues such as Halloween. We must first always be informed and have the facts regarding the issue, and secondly we must know the Biblical principles by which to discern those facts. In his great book, *Halloween: What’s A*

Christian To Do?, Steve Russo gives us both the facts and the principles. Let’s look at the facts about Halloween first:

~ Facts ~

Halloween’s origin goes back to the British Isles and the Druids, an ancient pagan priesthood and one of the roots of modern day Wicca. They worshiped the sun god, called by names like Bel or Chrom and on October 31 they believed that he died and went

into the kingdom of the dead. The Druids considered their highest festival day of the year to be Samhain, the feast of the Dead, which was named after Saman, the god of the Dead. The purpose of Samhain was to insure his return.

Later the ancient Celtic (Irish, Scottish, Welsh) people adopted the festival of Samhain from the Druids. This was a time when people believed that the spirits of the dead roamed the earth. As days grew shorter and winter approached, the people were afraid that life itself was coming to an end. They imagined that the night was haunted by ghosts, witches, and the spirits of the dead. Fearful for their survival, the people would do everything possible to appease or chase away evil spirits, so they would light bonfires and even make horrible sacrifices to these spirits.

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The Celtic New Year is November 1 and is the beginning of the new year for wiccan witches. November 1 is also the Day of the Dead, a time when it was believed that the souls of those who had died during the year were allowed back into the land of the living and that spirits were wandering the earth. The timing or the festival of Samhain was connected to harvest time. It was believed that all livestock and crops needed to be brought in and secured by Halloween for the hard winter-weather that was coming.

November 1, the first day of the New Year, and the coming of winter were seen as transitional points on the calendar so many beliefs and rituals were associated with this day. The people believed that the barrier that separated the living world from the dead was opened, so this, coupled with the darkness and the harshness of winter was a very frightening time for the Celtic people. They developed a custom of preparing offerings of special foods for the spirits and of dressing up in costumes to resemble these spirits



and wild animals, thinking they could disguise themselves and escape being harmed.

As Christian missionaries began to evangelize these countries, the early church had a practice of adopting and accommodating the traditional religious beliefs and practices of those it sought to convert. Many of the holidays we observe today have been derived in part from one of these ancient festivals and celebrations. In an attempt to take something evil and turn it into something good, the church declared November 1 to be All Saints' Day and November 2 to be All Souls' Day. The celebration for these two religious holidays began at sundown on October 31. So, October 31 became known as the Eve of All Saints' Day, the Eve of All Hallows (hallow is a term which refers to a saint), or All Hallow's Eve. This is how the name Halloween came to be.

All Saint's Day was instituted by Pope Gregory IV to pay honor to all the saints who did not have a feast day reserved for them. All Souls' Day was set aside to recognize the souls of the faithful who had died during the previous year. The church sought to teach people that the gods and spiritual beings of their traditional religions were false. They taught them that these spiritual powers were real but were evil and of the devil. This is how the symbols of ghosts, skulls, skeletons, the devil, and witches came to represent Halloween. The Samhain belief that October 31 was the time of the wandering dead, the lighting of bonfires, and the customs

of leaving offering of food and drink for people in costumes continued to be practiced on that night. Even after Christianity succeeded in curbing paganism, the people still continued to practice some of its customs, but they reinterpreted them to give them new and somewhat innocent meanings.

Halloween has been known in North America since colonial days, but it wasn't until the Irish settlers brought their Halloween costumes to America in the 1840s that the festival starting growing in popularity. By the middle of the twentieth century Halloween was mostly a child's holiday. But by the late 1970s adults had a renewed interest in Halloween activities and in the last decade of the twentieth century Halloween exploded in popularity in the United States. Now:

- More than 50 million Americans will celebrate Halloween.

- 90 percent of all families with children ages 12 and younger will participate in trick-or-treating or costume parties.
- Halloween is the third most popular holiday occasion for adults and one-third of all adults host or attend a Halloween party. Adults in their twenties and thirties are most likely to party at Halloween.
- An estimated 400 million dollars is spent on Halloween each year.
- Halloween is second only to Christmas for holiday decorating. An estimated 50 percent of all Americans decorate for Halloween.
- Halloween decorations have extended to the outdoors, with yard signs, door decorations, with traditional ghosts, bats, witches, pumpkins, and vampires being the most popular items.

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The main emphasis of Halloween dating back to the ancient Druids has been death, ghosts, and spirits. These things used to be of interest only around Halloween but now the interest in spirit phenomena is all year long. Supernatural happenings are the theme a number of popular movies and television series. Special programs can be found on ghosts and poltergeists throughout the year. “Poltergeists” comes from two German words which literally translated mean, “noisy ghosts.”

Steve Russo says that poltergeists involve a number of different manifestations, such as cold rooms, oppressive air, foul smells, unusual voices, bizarre humanlike apparitions, movement of objects, strange markings on people or furniture, spontaneous fires, electromagnetic occurrences, unusual physical symptoms, and so on. People try to explain or identify poltergeists in different ways, but the three most common explanations are:

1. The Christian view that poltergeists are biblical demons.
2. The parapsychological belief that poltergeists are an entirely different human phenomenon as a result of various manifestations of alleged psychic power (i.e. psychokinetic).
3. The mediumistic interpretation that poltergeists are the roaming spirits of the human dead.

Steve goes on to say that most of the psychic researchers, parapsychologists, and occultist who investigate these phenomena seem to ignore the demonic theory, but the poltergeist occurrences seem to support the same goals of the evil spirits the Bible calls demons. Halloween has given many people a fascination with ghosts but the Bible says in I Corinthians 10:20 that Christians are “not to be participants with demons.”

Witchcraft is another common theme of Halloween, although our society today is doing everything it can to change the image of witchcraft from something evil to something positive. Witchcraft (or Wicca) was recognized legally in America in 1985. It has eight major holidays that revolve around the changing of the seasons. On these days groups of three to 13 witches (called a coven), form magic circles where they perform rituals and read spells. Although witches have many gods and goddesses, they believe that the universe was created by a goddess, because only women have the ability to create life by giving birth.

Magic is an important part of witchcraft and they say that any witch has the power to make things happen. They teach that magic is performed in an altered state of consciousness called alpha, in which fewer brain-waves register per second. Witches say that they can use this altered state of consciousness to do something as simple as getting a parking place to cleaning up

the environment or performing psychic healing. They use crystals and wear pentacles, a five-pointed star inside a circle that is said to bring wisdom and protection.

Many people who study witchcraft are searching for spiritual truth and the supernatural. Feminists, and those who are interested in the environment, find witchcraft very enticing, also. But without question, the big draw is power. Witchcraft is experiencing a renewed interest today, especially among teenagers. Many may see it as interesting or fun, but God says that witchcraft is a very serious matter. Witchcraft refers to the performance of magic for non-biblical purposes, and is forbidden and

condemned by God in both the Old and the New Testament. The word, “witchcraft” is related to the old English word, “wiccan,” which means, “the practice of magical arts.” The Bible strictly forbids all forms of witchcraft, including sorcery, astrology, and magic.

God created us to rely on Him for guidance, power, and direction in life—not Satan and the forces of evil. He will not tolerate anything that humans try to substitute in their lives for the one, true, living God. He says plainly in Exodus 20:3, “You shall have no other gods before me.” Witchcraft and its influences can be found everywhere. In movies, television, music, books, magazines, computer and board games, and even in comic books.

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The environmental movement is very popular among witches who are encouraging us to be good to “Mother Earth.” Of course we are to care for the planet that God has given us, but we are never to worship what God created. Witches will try to convince us that they are harmless and good as they talk about their concern for the environment, equal treatment of the sexes, and other problems in our society. But make no mistake about it—God says witchcraft, all witchcraft is evil and should be taken seriously.

In the last few years there has been a huge rise in the preoccupation with evil and the occult. People of all ages seem to be fascinated by it and are tempted to dabble in these things—many people are using Halloween as an excuse to do just that. We must remember, that the more footholds we give the devil in our lives, the easier it becomes to move away from God and into evil. Steve Russo says “If Satan can get you to believe a lie, he can get you to live a lie.”

The title of a book written by Hal Lindsey several years ago is, *Satan Is Alive and Well On Planet Earth*, is a perfect synopsis of the condition and the whereabouts of our enemy. Yet many Christians go as far as to even question the existence of Satan. That is exactly the way he would like to keep it. We are all involved in a life or death battle, whether we acknowledge

it or not. To understand the seriousness of the battle we are engaged in, we must first understand our enemy.

Movies, books, games, songs, and even celebrities present Satan as something other than what he really is. It seems as if Satan is either portrayed as a little guy in a red suit, with horns on his head and carrying a pitchfork, or as a creature who is part human, and part monster. Is it any wonder that many people don't take him seriously? Satan's strategy is working, even among those who claim to be Christian, because in a national survey, of those who responded, 47 percent of people who are associated with evangelical churches, and 65 percent of mainline Protestants said that they don't believe the devil is real. If we don't believe he is real, then we don't have to be on our guard against him and his evil schemes.

God's Word makes it very clear that Satan and his demons are very real. They are powerful, intelligent, and very deceptive, and we must never underestimate them. We must also remember that Jesus Christ has already defeated Satan on the cross at Calvary. The devil is powerless in the presence of the Son of God. We can withstand his attacks and his attempts to destroy us if we do as God has commanded us in James 4:7: “Submit yourselves, then, to

God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” God's counsel needs to be heeded, not just at Halloween, but throughout the year.

~ Principles ~

Steve Russo wisely gives us five Biblical principles which can help us decide whether an activity is one in which we should participate. Rather than relying on our own opinions, let's look at what the Bible has to say:

1. Not everything is constructive. The Bible tells us that Christians are no longer under the law, but under grace. This means that we are free in Christ to do anything that is not forbidden in the Bible as being sinful. But it also tells us that the freedom we have in Christ must be used in such a way as to build up our own spiritual life and encourage others. I Corinthians 10:23 says,

“Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial.” We must be careful when it comes to questionable things, or gray areas, which are not specifically mentioned in the Bible. These are gray areas which usually involve contemporary cultural issues like Halloween.

In the 1940s and 1950s Halloween was a much more innocent activity, but today it has an association with the occult. After having examined at the facts, it isn't hard to see that Christians should not actually celebrate Halloween. But what about participating in alternative activities? Some good questions to ask ourselves based on I Corinthians 10:23 are, “Will this activity be a constructive one? Will it be beneficial in strengthening my spiritual life? Will it encourage or discourage other weaker believers?”



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2. Guard against unholy practices. In Deuteronomy 18:10-13, God gives us a list of things God says are evil. There are many Halloween celebrations and parties which include occult activities, and costumes, decorations, and games which have occult influences. Of course these should be strictly avoided. But a child trick-or-treating dressed in an innocent costume certainly does not fall into this category. Parents will need to guard carefully to make sure that occult-related items such as witches, ghosts, poltergeists, goblins, or gnomes do not make it into their homes.

3. Stay focused on what is good and pure. The words of Philippians 4:8 are helpful in deciding what we should do regarding Halloween. “Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” All of us need to always be examining the things we feed our minds through television, the internet, books, computer games, movies, and magazines. We should measure everything by the standard God has given us in this verse. Our focus is to be on things which are good, not evil.

4. Sidestep all evil. Of course evil is everywhere in our society today but it is even more noticeable at Halloween. People seem to be more fascinated with evil during Halloween

than at other times of the year. Many want to see how close they can get to these things without “crossing the line.” The Bible has a word for such people in I Thessalonians 5:22: “Avoid every kind of evil.” Instead of seeing how close to evil we can get, we need to see how far away we can stay. Evil is an enticing and seductive thing, and it is very easy to be pulled across the line without even realizing what is happening until it is too late. Halloween can be a gateway to the occult and we need to avoid evil at all costs.

5. Be aware of the battle. As we have seen, Satan is a liar and a deceiver. One of his most dangerous lies is that there is no real conflict between good and evil, and therefore no serious threat to believers. In Ephesians 6:12 God says that is not true. Paul writes, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Christians are not only battling against Satan but also against all the demons of hell. There is a world that we cannot see which is corrupt and wicked. Halloween is said to be the highest of holy days for Satanists. Satan worshippers use witches, wizards, sorcery, amulets, talismans, vampires, incantations, the practice of necromancy, and blood sacrifices as tools of worship. Christians cannot afford to be ignorant

of the battle around us. Even though Satan is a crafty and powerful enemy, we have no reason to fear because our God is greater and Satan is a defeated enemy.

After examining the facts regarding Halloween and applying the principles God has given us in His Word for making our decisions, we need to be careful to understand that there will still be differing opinions in the Christian community about Halloween. When areas of Christian living are not specifically mentioned in the Bible, believers must “agree to disagree without being disagreeable.” In I Corinthians 10:31 the Bible

says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” This is the highest test we can apply to our lives. This test does not just apply to activities, but to attitudes as well. God is much more concerned about the attitude of our hearts than He is about what we do or don’t do. Any Christian who believes they have glorified God because they have made a certain decision regarding an activity has totally missed the point if their attitude toward another brother or sister in Christ doesn’t honor God as well.

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