



**RISE ON FIRE MINISTRIES
TEACHING NOTES**

Churches Are Doing Halloween – Would Jesus?

Please note: The following notes is provided as a **behind-the-scenes perk** to Rise on Fire Partners/Members. They are not always neat, but rough notes used to prepare for the corresponding video teaching available on [www.riseonfire.com]. Because almost all Rise on Fire videos are unscripted, these notes are simply a guide. You may archive and share these notes as you wish, if you give credit to Rise on Fire where appropriate.

Churches are doing Halloween - Would Jesus? by PD Vander Westhuizen

Halloween just ended, how was yours? On mine, I drove up to a local church doing "Trunk or Treat", a "lightened" version of Halloween, to speak to the head pastor about it. I wanted to understand his thinking and motivations behind their participation in Halloween. His motivations were interesting, but are they biblical?

The big question is: How do we ensure we are a light, as Yeshua was a light, while ensuring we do not celebrate or partake in darkness and sin in the process? I hope this video answers that question.

- **So last week** was Halloween.
- So here's the thing: **I'm a South African, and I'm passionate about God.** I recently moved to the United States, and this year was my first Halloween.
 - Yesterday when I drove through the streets seeing children and adults dressing up and trick or treating, it was weird to me.
 - But similarly, depending on where you're from, the fact that I've never celebrated Halloween may seem weird to you.
 - **And I get that:** When we grow up with something and it is now our **tradition, we often don't think twice about it!**
- **But should we think twice?**

- I went ahead to **speak to local American pastors**, search **the scriptures**, to **understand why Christians celebrate it, and whether God desires us to.**
- I want to remind you that all we do should be **a living sacrifice to God**, everything we do in life must be **God honoring and in line with His will.** That is why this video is important.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." - Philippians 4:8

There are 3 camps of believers around Halloween:

- Believers who believe celebrating all aspects of Halloween is **fine**
- Believers who **abstain from certain dark themes** while celebrating.
 - E.g. They will let their kids dress up and participate on the day of Halloween, but **as super heroes** instead of dressing up as something evil.
- Believers who believe all aspects of Halloween should be **avoided**

Brief History of Halloween

- *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions:* The feasts of Halloween, or All Hallows Eve and the devotions to the dead on All Saints' and All Souls' Day are both mixtures of ancient Celtic, Druid and other pagan customs (Samhein) intertwined with Christian practice.

PAGANS:

- **Celtics (500BC - 500AD):** Celts thought the barrier between our world and the world of ghosts and spirits was removed.
 - Weird creatures with strange powers could **wander about on Earth**
 - **Animal sacrifices to Celtic deities** and even dressing in costumes made of animal hides to fool evil spirits.
- **Satanists/Witches/Warlocks:** consider it a **high-holy day**

CHRISTIANITY:

- **Eighth century:** Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints (All Saints Day, All Hallows Eve)
- The feast was originally pagan, **but merged and Christianized** with the hope that **pagans would be able to join the Christian faith in an easier way if they could retain the outline of their tradition.**
- In America: Majority of **protestants rejected Halloween** until the 19th century

I drove by a church with a pumpkin patch in front as well as "Trunk or Treat" on their sign, so I was curious about what they were doing. I had the opportunity to speak with a local pastor about his thoughts on Halloween.

Pastor's Motivations:

- **Reaching the lost of the world**
 - Which I agree with: We need to give Jesus on Halloween
 - People who do nothing on Halloween can learn from this: **Jesus would be involved in some way to reach the lost.**
 - **But how?**
 1. **Pastor's example of bar:** Sitting at a bar, but not drinking (sinning)
 2. Being in the environment, but not participating
 - This is a good motivation! But we need to analyze the way we do things practically and consider how it will be **perceived** by outsiders.

- **The "Church" (Body of Christ as a whole) has a great responsibility:**
 - Our actions are what **declares to the world** what is acceptable unto God.
 - Whether we like it or not: The world looks to the actions of the body of believers as **moral indications for what is "acceptable"**
 - **Think about bikinis (clothing):** A hundred years ago, it was taboo.
 - Then secular culture **starts accepting it**, church rejects.
 - Then finally church **accepts it and gives in to the cultural norm** and through that declares to the coming generations **"This is acceptable"** - and they don't bat an eye.
 1. e.g In America: Majority of protestants rejected Halloween until the 19th century
 2. Christmas: "Shocking as it sounds, followers of Jesus Christ in both America and England helped pass laws making it illegal to observe Christmas, believing it was an insult to God to honor a day associated with ancient paganism," (Thomas Nelson Inc, 2008).

- **Not worshipping other gods**
 - Even though the pastor himself knows **he is not worshipping a Celtic god or the demons** associated with the feast, he said **it is about "perspective"** and **by his own admission people from outside can think he celebrates Halloween.**
 - In fact, I spoke to a member of the congregation itself who said they are celebrating Halloween with "Trunk or Treat".
 - **Outsiders can stumble** because they think he is celebrating Halloween - evil.

- 1Co 8:4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one."
- 1Co 8:5 For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—

- 1Co 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.
- 1Co 8:7 However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.
- 1Co 8:8 Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.
- 1Co 8:9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.
- 1Co 8:10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?
- 1Co 8:11 And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died.
- 1Co 8:12 Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.
- 1Co 8:13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Other scriptures regarding Halloween:

- **GOD DOES NOT CALL US TO REDEEM**

Do not inquire about their gods, asking, "How do these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise." **You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way**, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

Deut 12:31

- **Halloween imitates evil**

Beloved, do not **imitate evil** but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

3 John 1:11

- **Abhor what is evil**

Rom 12:9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

- We need to figure out the perfect balance between (1) **Not celebrating Halloween** and (2) **Being a light**
 - **Participation / Celebration: Dressing up, walking to get candy, decorating your home**
 - **What would Jesus do:**
 - He would **not** go door to door **asking for candy, handing out candy or dressing up**

- He **would** not go out to **esteem the day**, but simply **minister freedom as with all days. That is what he did with His disciples.**

- **Fast from Halloween:**

Isa 58:6 **"Is not this the fast that I choose:** to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?"

Isa 58:7 Is it not to **share your bread with the hungry** and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Isa 58:8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

- **Feed the homeless**
- **Go into the streets to pray for people**
 - **And when they ask why: Don't tell them you're celebrating Halloween**
 - **Tell them you're a disciple of Jesus; and He has sent you for this**
- **Making it a safe environment for children to do Halloween in, to "have fun"**
 - **Not just about reaching the lost, but also letting their children do a version of Halloween**

The biggest problem:

- Not the feast of Halloween itself: But rather, the fact that we get so excited about dressing up like ghosts and everything with an appearance of evil, while **abandoning the feasts** He actually did give us to celebrate
- We were made to celebrate feasts; it is in our DNA and God **made us that way**
 - When we **fill that void, we don't desire the feasts of this world** as much as God's feasts because we feel **fulfilled**
 - It is **"fun for children"**

Did you know God has already given us 7 beautiful feasts that have largely been forgotten by the church?

- **I don't blame you, I didn't know of them either. But what if our ignorance of these feasts is part of the enemy's plan to divorce us from God's days, in favor of days of the world?**

5 REASONS TO CELEBRATE HIS FEASTS

- His feasts are **biblical**
- His feasts **teach us about different aspects of God and His love, His timeline and ultimate return**
- His feasts **serves as a cyclical reminder for us to evaluate/audit our lives in light of His second coming through repentance**
- His feasts are His: not the worlds or Jewish

- His feasts are **all about worshipping Him: We don't need to adapt pagan feasts, because His feasts are His to begin with!**
 - **Passover/Unleavened Bread: Get rid of leavened bread**
 - **Pentecost (Shavuot): Willow branches**
 - **Sukkot: Go camping!**
 - **Trumpets: Blow trumpets!**
 - **Day of Atonement: Repent and Fast**

So, who's right?

- Believers who believe celebrating all aspects of Halloween is **fine**
- Believers who **abstain from certain dark themes** while celebrating.
 - E.g. They will let their kids dress us and participate on the day of Halloween, but **as super heroes** instead of dressing up as something evil.
- Believers who believe all aspects of Halloween should be **avoided**

None! Rather:

- **Instead of locking ourselves up in a room** on Halloween, we would do well to do what Jesus would do: That is to **go out into the world and be a light of freedom**, all while abstaining from celebrating Halloween by taking or handing out candy, or dressing up.

We have multiple teachings on God's biblical feast days, check them out on our website!

Also check out: Halloween - Does God Care? For more information on the **history of Halloween.**

If this blessed you, please share this video with friends and family to make them see the biblical perspective on Halloween.

May the next Halloween be one where you walk as Yeshua walked.