

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

1300 E. Boynton St. • Hamilton • www.parkheightscoc.com

Thus Saith the Lord

HALLOWEEN

By Jeff Sweeten

Halloween has deep roots in Druid paganism but has become an inane “holiday” of free candy and mischief for most Americans. It started with the Celts in a celebration of “Samhain,” the Celtic lord of death. They believed that on October 31st, all the souls of the dead passed through the barrier separating them from the living to come back to haunt their old haunts. On their New Year’s Eve (Nov. 1st), to protect themselves from these ghosts, the Celtic priests ordered their people to put out their home fire. In a time before Bic lighters, having a dependable source of fire through a harsh northern-European winter was a key to survival, so this was no small affair. They then built a huge “sacred” bonfire and offered animal, crop and, several scholars think, human sacrifices, leaving food out for the spooks so they would not spitefully smite them during the night while taking a part of the “sacred fire” home to light their fires and receive good luck for the next year.

The Romans absorbed their idolatrous beliefs and called it “Feralia” to honor the dead. Little children dressed up like ghouls and goblins and went house to house begging treats under threat of going poltergeist, spinning their head and doing something bad – okay, maybe they didn’t spin their head. Years later, Catholics forcibly converted the Celts and decided that, if the locals must celebrate the dead, the “church” would innovate and Voilà! – “All Saints (Hallow’s) Day,” which was preceded by “All Hallow’s Eve,” or Halloween, with all its pagan, idolatrous trappings – black cats, witches, bats, and skulls.

Now, 5-year-old tykes running around Hamilton in Spiderman costumes with Snicker-sticky fingers are not pagan devil worshipers (puuullease!) but the Bible does condemn idolatry and witchcraft (Galatians 5:19-21). So, Paul’s words ring true: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not” (1 Corinthians 10:23). What we do has influence on those around us and we should ask: Does this activity glorify God? Eating sweets and visiting the neighbors is authorized (Proverbs 24:13; Acts 15:36) but Christians must make sure that those who see us do what we do make no mistake as to why we do it. So, eat candy, visit the neighbors, but be safe this “Halloween.”

JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!

SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Bible Study

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130