

Jezebel Lives
Problems with Thyatira Stuff Today
Revelation 2:18-29

Scripture quotations taken from the **New American Standard Bible® (NASB)**,
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. www.Lockman.org

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2016 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com> All rights reserved.

Revelation 2:18–29

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’” (NASB95)

As we look at the methods and ways the church, which began to see serious compromise issues pop up during the middle ages, continues to be compromised today, we need to remember who our enemy is and what his modus operandi is. Again, a reminder, we are in a war, whether we want to be or not, we are. There is no neutrality in this war, you are on one side, or the other. Our problem today is the same as Thyatira, sometimes we just do not pick up on the deception going on.

Compromise has been a problem since Genesis 3. We want to, and God says no, there are absolutes. But in our culture of no absolutes, the fact that boundaries that have existed for thousands of years are now being swept away, is a problem. God has not changed His mind about sin, or about anything else in the Bible.

We have not changed in our behavior since Genesis 3 and we continue to want to make Him like us in our image. But He will not compromise and let us do that.

Genesis 3:1–7

“Now the serpent was more shrewd than any of the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Is it really true that God said, ‘You must not eat from any tree of the orchard?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit from the trees of the orchard; but concerning the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the orchard God said, ‘You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it, or else you will die.’” The serpent said to the woman, “Surely you will not die, for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will open and you will be like divine beings who know good and evil.” When the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.” (NET)

Fast forward to the time of Jesus and His dealing with the masters of legalistic compromise, the Pharisees. They compromised within the confines of the Torah. What was Jesus' opinion of the way they operated?

John 8:44

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (NASB95)

That method of operation for Satan has not changed over the centuries and continues unabated even today. Many times, when compromising, we think we are defending the faith, but there is no relationship with Jesus reflected behind it. We are just trying to accommodate the culture in order to achieve attendance numbers in the church or to prevent persecution. This is why Jesus had to address the issues in Thyatira.

Satan has partially succeeded within the culture by the way. Belief in intelligent evil is at an all-time low. George Barna shares that "Perceptions about Satan are another point of theological murkiness for millions of Americans. Barely one-quarter of the public believes Satan is a living entity. A similar proportion believes Satan is merely a symbol of evil but not a living entity. The other half of the public is not sure what to make of the idea of the devil. Overall, Satan is not a being or a spiritual concept that most Americans take seriously." (Barna 2016, Kindle Locations 308-311)

What does this really mean? It means that less than 25% of the people in the United States, or less than 81.8 million people, believe that Satan is even real. But, according to a poll done by YouGov.com in May of 2014, 40% believe in ghosts and 31% believe in extraterrestrial UFOs. Think about that for a moment, more people believe in UFOs than believe in Satan. But what is behind ghosts and UFOs?

The UFOs do not seem to exist as tangible, manufactured objects. They do not conform to the accepted natural laws of our environment. They seem to be nothing more than transmogrifications tailoring themselves to our abilities to understand. The thousands of contacts with the entities indicate that they are liars and put-on artists. The UFO manifestations seem to be, by and large, merely minor variations of the age-old demonological phenomenon. (Keel 2013, 326)

Satan is still there, he is still lying to everyone all of the time. We are at war and need to remember what Peter says in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (NASB95)

Satan deceives, that is what he does, it is his nature. Unfortunately, we just do not get it unless we put on and keep on our armor. Belief in the supernatural, beyond the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is tough to find in the church these days. We do not understand that Satan never rests in his warfare, never. The problem today though is that in the church we feel safe, people come in and talk the right kind of language, they use the lingo of the saved, they use God talk; and we feel ok with what is being sold to us. We have to continually apply what Paul described in Ephesians 6:10-13, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." (NASB95)

We have been discussing the longest letter Jesus had John write, a letter to the small rather insignificant city of Thyatira. But in the letter, which is not only a warning to the current church in Thyatira, is prophetic information regarding problems that will be arising from this type of church on into the future. These are not just problems that arose from the experience of the Eastern and Western Orthodox Churches of the Middle Ages, but many things which we continue to deal with today that are not Biblical.

Example – Maryolatry

Though Rome makes a semantic distinction between hyperdulia paid to Mary and the latria paid to God, she essentially deifies Mary. According to Alphonsus Liguori, a Romish saint, Mary is the Queen of Mercy as Jesus Christ is the King of Justice. Vatican II decreed, “The blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix” (Lumen Gentium, VIII, par. 62). John Paul II has plainly stated that in Mary “is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity, ... [in Mary] is accomplished the work of reconciliation” (On Reconciliation and Penance, p. 139). (Cairns 2002, 272-273)

In Roman Catholicism, the worship accorded to the Virgin Mary. Rome has three types of worship:

1. latria, belongs only to God;
2. dulia is the worship accorded to the saints;
3. hyperdulia is supposed to be inferior to latria but superior to dulia. (Cairns 2002, 218)

This is a willful rejection of what Jesus told to His disciples just before He went to the cross. In John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (NASB95) Mary can do nothing. The saints can do nothing. Worship provided to the saints is the same as worshipping the dead. More about that to come.

Hebrews 10:10–14

“By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (NASB95) Again, Mary can do nothing. Only Jesus Christ can forgive sins. Only Jesus Christ is the way to the Father.

Example – works are required for salvation

The Eastern Church, which split from Rome in 1054, rejected papal supremacy but also holds to doctrines which are problems. For example, they hold to a synergistic view of salvation.

It means cooperation and is used to teach that man works together with God to effect his salvation. One particularly prevalent form of this notion is that in regeneration the sinner cooperates with the Holy Spirit. Semi-Pelagians teach that man indeed takes the first step and is then helped by divine grace. Arminians hold that while God makes the first move, He cannot complete the work of regeneration without the consent and cooperation of the sinner.

Reformed theology rejects all this and honours the Biblical doctrine that “salvation is of the Lord.” (Cairns 2002, 443)

Again, what do the scriptures tell us? (Emphasis added) John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes** in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (NASB95)

Ephesians 2:4–9

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—**by grace you are saved!**—and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, to demonstrate in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.**” (NET)

As the Church of the Middle Ages grew in power and position. Missionaries went throughout what had been the Roman Empire and beyond taking the word of God everywhere including areas previously not

reached, such as the British Isles and Russia. It wasn't all compromise. God's word was being preached. The Greek Orthodox Church (Eastern) were the first to reach Russia and as part of their outreach, they first developed Russian into a written language and then translated the Bible into the language of those living there. Wycliffe Bible Translators do the same around the world today.

The history of Bible versions in the Slavonic begins with the second half of the ninth century. The oldest translation, commonly called the Church Slavonic, is closely connected with the activity of the two apostles to the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius, in Moravia, 864–885. The oldest manuscripts are written either in the so-called Cyrillic or the Glagolitic character. The former is the Greek majuscule writing of the ninth century with the addition of new characters for Slavic sounds which are not found in the Greek of that time; the latter was a style of the Greek minuscule with the addition of new signs as in the Cyrillic alphabet. (Jackson ed. 1908-1914, 152)

Thanks to the missionary efforts, we have John 3:16 in Russian. “Ибо так возлюбил Бог мир, что отдал Сына Своего Единородного, дабы всякий верующий в Него, не погиб, но имел жизнь вечную.” (Russian Synodal Translation 1956)

Again, just as we saw in Thyatira, during the period immediately after the fall of Rome, there are those who are faithful, there are those who are not, and there are those who are somewhere in the middle, all existing at the same time in the same church. We deal with this today as well.

Let's talk about another infiltration made by the enemy. One that we are dealing with here at Calvary Church annually; and is dealt with by believers throughout the United States. This infiltration is attempted every year at the end of October. To see where this comes from, we have to go back in time to see the origin of this infiltration. It is called Halloween.

In AD 835, Pope Gregory IV designated November 1 as All Saints' Day, or All Hallows' Day (the term hallow refers to saints). The night before November 1, October 31, was known as All Hallows' Evening. (Ankerberg 2008, 9)

When that decision was made, Samhain, which is the last night of October, was routinely celebrated in Celtic culture. We are talking about Gaul and the British Isles.

All Saints' Day and Hallowe'en originated in a pagan festival. Before the days of Christianity, the Druids in England (priests of a Celtic race) had the idea that people needed to be cleansed after they had died. The soul of the departed was transferred by magic to the body of an animal. During the night of October 31, the enchanted chanted souls were freed by the Druid god, Samhain, and taken together into the Druid heaven. (Koch 1986, Kindle Locations 1297-1300)

Even though Christianity had come to what had been Gaul and to the British Isles, this continued to be observed and celebrated.

That is the time when inhabitants of the underworld mingled with the people. On that night, the ghosts and other unfriendly creatures from the other world were allowed to scare the living. (Wessels 2001, 347)

Some Background

The most venerated priests among the Celts were the Druids....They were a native Celtic priesthood. Druid means “the very knowing or wise one,” and the druids were thought to possess the key to all knowledge and magic. They exercised authority in the selection of rulers and took precedence of kings. Magical power to give or withhold rain or sunshine, to cause storms, to make women and cattle fruitful, to make objects invisible, to produce magic sleep, etc., was attributed to them. No sacrifice was complete without one of them. They seem to have been distinguished by some kind of a tonsure. At the mistletoe rite they were dressed in white, but at other times they wore scarlet and gold-embroidered robes and golden necklets and bracelets. (Barton 1919, 296)

From Julius Caesar

Report says that in the schools of the Druids they learn by heart a great number of verses, and therefore some persons remain twenty years under training. And they do not think it proper to commit these utterances to writing, although in almost all other matters, and in their public and private accounts, they make use of Greek letters. I believe that they have adopted the practice for two reasons—that they do not wish the rule to become common property, nor those who learn the rule to rely on writing and so neglect the cultivation of the memory; and, in fact, it does usually happen that the assistance of writing tends to relax the diligence of the student and the action of the memory. The cardinal doctrine which they seek to teach is that souls do not die, but after death pass from one to another; and this belief, as the fear of death is thereby cast aside, they hold to be the greatest incentive to valour. Besides this, they have many discussions as touching the stars and their movement, the size of the universe and of the earth, the order of nature, the strength and the powers of the immortal gods, and hand down their lore to the young men. (Caesar 1919, 339)

Caesar also found out about their practices as well and made recommendations

It is believed that their rule of life was discovered in Britain and transferred thence to Gaul; and to-day those who would study the subject more accurately journey, as a rule, to Britain to learn it. (Caesar 1919, 337)

The whole nation of the Gauls is greatly devoted to ritual observances, and for that reason those who are smitten with the more grievous maladies and who are engaged in the perils of battle either sacrifice human victims or vow so to do, employing the Druids as ministers for such sacrifices. They believe, in effect, that, unless for a man's life a man's life be paid, the majesty of the immortal gods may not be appeased; and in public, as in private, life they observe an ordinance of sacrifices of the same kind. Others use figures of immense size, whose limbs, woven out of twigs, they fill with living men and set on fire, and the men perish in a sheet of flame. They believe that the execution of those who have been caught in the act of theft or robbery or some crime is more pleasing to the immortal gods; but when the supply of such fails they resort to the execution even of the innocent. (Caesar 1919, 341)

The Celtic year was originally an agricultural year, and their festivals were connected with the agricultural seasons. The year was ushered in on the first of November by the feast of Samhain. This was apparently a threshing festival. Possibly when the Celts lived in more southerly lands it had been a harvest festival. At this festival new fires were brought into each house from a sacred bonfire, kindled probably by friction of pieces of wood. The putting away of old fires expelled the spirits of evil; the new fire, obtained in this sacred way, assured the ritual purity necessary for a festival. Forecasts by divination, to learn the fate for the coming year, were also made. Animals were slaughtered for winter consumption. Samhain was also a festival of the dead; their ghosts were fed at this time. As winter came on the powers of growth were suffering eclipse, and men sought by magical means to aid them. This they did by means of a bonfire, from which brands were carried about and new fires lit in every house. In North Wales people jumped through the fire. There was a sacrifice at Samhain and there is some reason to believe that in early times it was a human sacrifice. (Barton 1919, 296-297)

We see some of the background of Samhain, which is connected with October 31st.

Where did the costumes come from?

Possibly the representation of the corn-spirit in animal form may have blended with the divinity of the animals slain at Samhain. Again, in Gaul, at the calends, as formerly at Samhain, men wore the heads and skins of slaughtered animals in processions, doubtless in order to assimilate themselves further to the animal divinities by contact, as they had already done by eating. This custom was vigorously attacked by Church Councils and by individual preachers. (Macler 1908-1926, 838-839)

They apparently believed that on October 31, the night before their New Year and the last day of the old year, Samhain gathered the souls of the evil dead who had been condemned to enter the bodies of

animals. He then decided what animal form they would take for the next year. (The souls of the good dead were reincarnated as humans.) The Druids also believed that the punishment of the evil dead could be lightened by sacrifices, prayers, and gifts to Samhain. (Ankerberg 2008, 11-12)

Samhain

A pagan festival for the dead (a little more to come on that.) They believed that the soul of the evil dead went into animals and the animals had to be killed to set the soul free. Connected with the Celts, run by the Druids. Initially followed in Germany as well as in the British Isles. It involved sacrifices, both animal and human.

It also involved the wearing of animals heads and skins, costumes.
They believed they came from the god of the dead.
They believed the soul of the good came back as humans.

The former author states that, 'in keeping with the cult of the Gauls, funerals are magnificent and sumptuous, and they cast upon the pyre all that they suppose pleasing to the living; even animals and, a short time ago, slaves and dependants who were evidently especially dear to the deceased were burned with them after the funeral rites had been duly performed.' Pomponius adds that, in consequence of the Gallic belief in immortality, 'they burn and bury with the dead things proper for the living,' and says that the human victims who were burned were either messengers (like the slaves killed to carry tidings to a deceased king in Dahomey) or faithful retainers who desired to continue life in the future world with their patrons. (Crooke 1908-1926, 440)

In spite of the coming of Christianity, this pagan festival continued to be kept in England until the sixth century. Gregory the Great (A.D. 540-604) advised the Archbishop of Canterbury to retain the hitherto Druid sacrifices and celebrate them in honor of the Christian saints. (Koch 1986, Kindle Locations 1305-1306)

In the light of Bible teaching, it is incredible that anyone should try to lead people to the living God with the aid of the demons. To return to the Druid festival, English settlers brought these customs to America. (Koch 1986, Kindle Locations 1305-1306)

The Gauls affirm that they are all descended from a common father, Dis, and say that this is the tradition of the Druids. (Caesar 1919, 343)

Dis was the Roman name for the god of the dead. (Ankerberg 2008, 11)

As a result of this belief, the Celts taught that on their New Year's Eve (our Halloween) ghosts, evil spirits, and witches roamed the earth. In order to honor the sun god (Belenus) and to frighten away evil spirits who allegedly feared fire, large bonfires were lit on hilltops. (Ankerberg 2008, 12)

As we can see, the origins of Halloween, and All Saints Day have origins that are questionable to say the least.

Then there is All Souls Day which has roots going back to festivals of Dionysus or Bacchus, specifically the "Anthesteria (Flower-Feast) came in the month of Anthesterion (February), when the first flowers appeared." (Orr ed. 1999)

Going on, we learn that "On the third day they offered pots filled with vegetables to Hermes, Conductor of the Dead. This day was sacred to the gods of the nether world and to the spirits of the departed (All Souls' Day); and the people celebrated Persephone's resurrection and reunion with the god." (Orr ed. 1999)

All Souls' Day

Noun - a Catholic festival with prayers for the souls of the dead in purgatory, held on 2 November. (Soanes and Stevenson 2004)

All Soul's Day

...on the day after All-saints' Day, for special prayer in behalf of the souls of all the faithful dead. It was first introduced in 998, by Odilon, abbot of Clugni, who enjoined it on his own order. It was soon after adopted by neighboring churches. It is the day on which, in the Romish Church, extraordinary masses are repeated for the relief of souls said to be in purgatory. Formerly, on this day, persons dressed in black perambulated the towns and cities, each provided with a bell of dismal tone, which was rung in public places, by way of exhortation to the people to remember the souls in purgatory (Farrar, Eccl. Dictionary, s. v.). (M'Clintock and Strong 1880, 168)

It Is Also Known As...

The Day of the Dead is a holiday celebrated in Mexico and by Latin Americans living in the United States and Canada. The holiday occurs in connection with the Catholic holidays that fall on November 1 and 2, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. On the Day of the Dead, more accurately called the "cult of the dead," friends and family members of those who have died gather together to pray for them and bring to their graves the deceased's favorite foods, often including the traditional "sugar skulls" and the "bread of death." Private altars honoring the deceased are created, and homage is given to them. Origins of the holiday have been traced back thousands of years to an Aztec festival dedicated to a goddess called Mictecacihuatl. (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

Disney recently released a movie centered around this theme, "Coco."

Where did this reverence for the dead idea come from? Babylon.

The closing lines of the Gilgamesh epic, where the fate of the neglected dead is portrayed, confirms this view. But such remains are more frequent in the early graves than in those of a later time. Animal sacrifices at the grave appear to be very old. Offerings of food and water were made to the dead, not only at the time of the burial, but afterwards by surviving relatives. The son performs the office of pouring out water to the memory of his father. The close of the legend of Ishtar's journey suggests that the festival of Tammuz was selected as an 'All-Souls' day. The weeping for the lost Tammuz served as an appropriate link for combining with the mourning for the god the lament for the dead. The water jar is never absent in the old Babylonian tombs, and by the side of the jar the bowl of clay or bronze is found, and which probably served the same purpose as a drinking utensil for the dead. (Jastrow Jr. 1898, 598-599)

What is God's view of venerating the dead?

Deuteronomy 14:1-2

"You are children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave your forehead bald for the sake of the dead. For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. He has chosen you to be his people, prized above all others on the face of the earth." (NET)

Sacrificing to the dead was a real problem dealt with by Moses thanks to Balaam.

Psalms 106:28-31

"They worshiped Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead. They made the LORD angry by their actions, and a plague broke out among them. Phinehas took a stand and intervened, and the plague subsided. This brought him a reward, an eternal gift." (NET)

Leviticus 19:28

"You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD." (NASB95)

Deuteronomy 18:9-14

“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, you must not learn the abhorrent practices of those nations. There must never be found among you anyone who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, anyone who practices divination, an omen reader, a soothsayer, a sorcerer, one who casts spells, one who conjures up spirits, a practitioner of the occult, or a necromancer. Whoever does these things is abhorrent to the LORD and because of these detestable things the LORD your God is about to drive them out from before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God. Those nations that you are about to dispossess listen to omen readers and diviners, but the LORD your God has not given you permission to do such things.” (NET)

Ezekiel 8:14–15

Then He brought me to the entrance of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. He said to me, “Do you see this, son of man? Yet you will see still greater abominations than these.” (NASB95)

Enter King Manasseh

2 Chronicles 33:5–9

“In the two courtyards of the LORD's temple he built altars for all the stars in the sky. He passed his sons through the fire in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom and practiced divination, omen reading, and sorcery. He set up a ritual pit to conjure up underworld spirits and appointed magicians to supervise it. He did a great amount of evil in the sight of the LORD and angered him. He put an idolatrous image he had made in God's temple, about which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, “This temple in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will be my permanent home. I will not make Israel again leave the land I gave to their ancestors, provided that they carefully obey all I commanded them, the whole law, the rules and regulations given to Moses.” But Manasseh misled the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem so that they sinned more than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed ahead of the Israelites.” (NET)

Exodus 22:18

“You shall not allow a sorceress to live.” (NASB95)

God lists out the deeds of the flesh for us

Galatians 5:19–21

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (NASB95)

Mark 12:27

“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.” (NASB95)

To sum up: the evidence, so far as it goes, shows clearly that even in historic times the cult of the dead and elements of ancestor-worship formed, more or less distinctly, part of Babylonian religious observances. (Crooke 1908-1926, 440)

So now back to Halloween, which is an issue of compromise for many in the church today. There is a whole lot more I could go into, but the bottom line is this, it comes from the Celts and has roots in the festival related to Samhain. It is also a big night for those into Wicca, and can be traced back to Babylon. The idea of venerating or even worshipping the dead comes from the same source.

...in early American history, Halloween was not celebrated due to America's strong Christian heritage. It was not widely observed until the twentieth century. (Ankerberg 2008, 14)

As you peel back the various trappings you begin to see that much involved with this day is an issue for concern. How about the carved pumpkin, the jack o lantern?

There appears to be no basis for carving a pumpkin or making a jack-o-lantern in any Christian tradition. The root of this practice seems to have come from the old Irish legend of a man named Jack, who once fooled the devil. The legend says that Jack, a wild man by nature, once got the devil up a tree, and then carved a cross in the trunk, so the devil could not climb down. In exchange for a ladder, the devil promised not to admit Jack into hell. Later, when Jack died, and was not admitted into heaven, and was not admitted into hell, he was forced to restlessly walk the earth, with a poor man's lantern—a carved turnip or gourd, with a burning coal for light and warmth. Thus the jack-o-lantern is, in this legend, the symbol for a miserable, lost soul. (Bissett 2009, 243)

The church today is dealing with syncretism in every avenue. There is pressure to say Allah is the same as the God of the Bible, that is not the case. There is pressure to change one's view of sexuality and what marriage is all about. There is pressure to move from using scripture as the standard. There is pressure to throw out hell. There is pressure to say we all evolved from nothing. And there is serious pressure to cease teaching about the end of the age.

By the way, as we have seen, syncretism comes from Rome itself under the emperors. They thought that all roads lead to God, they don't, they did not then, and they still do not.

John 14:1–6

“Do not let your hearts be distressed. You believe in God; believe also in me. There are many dwelling places in my Father's house. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going away to make ready a place for you. And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that where I am you may be too. And you know the way where I am going.” Thomas said, “Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus replied, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (NET)

Malachi 3:6

“For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.” (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:8–9

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.” (NASB95)

John 8:58

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” (NASB95)

In Martin Luther's time, the corrupt practice of buying indulgences for the dead “suffering in purgatory” was common. Appropriately, in 1517, on Halloween day itself, Luther took his 95 Theses, which attacked the concept of selling indulgences to free those in purgatory, and nailed them to the castle church door in Wittenberg, Germany. (Ankerberg 2008, 23)

But this is all past history, Halloween has none of those meanings attached to it today. Right?

3 John 11

“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.” (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 10:23–24

“All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.” (NASB95)

I have found over the years that those who do not know the Lord are confused and hold to things which are not Biblical and attached significance to things which also are not Biblical. I have also learned that they tend to hold those who they know to be believers, to a different standard, one that would make the best legalist go back to revise their list.

If we observe Halloween, are we confusing the unbeliever? Are we imitating evil?

In Germany, the association of All Saints' Day with the pagan Druid festival has long since disappeared. Only the religious custom has remained, and it is very popular among Catholic people. (Koch 1986, Kindle Locations 1306-1307)

There is nothing wrong with repurposing the event to the cause of Christ. The problem to deal with though is all of the trappings that go along with the traditional American version of Halloween which includes witches, ghosts, and more. As we have seen, not exactly honoring to God and it all goes back to Babylon at some point. As a 21st century church, you see, we also have to deal with the things of Thyatira.

Same Sex Marriage

What are God's thoughts on this latest intrusion of the culture? What does the Bible say?

Romans 1:22–27

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.” (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (NASB95)

Sean McDowell discusses 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. “Friends, you might not like this passage. It might make you uncomfortable, but Paul clearly places homosexuality along with other issues—the practice of homosexuality along with the practice of being greedy, the practice of being drunk, the practice of stealing things—specifically with those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. I don't feel comfortable saying, “Well, maybe Paul didn't mean it. Maybe Paul meant something else.” Paul specifically ties those who practice homosexuality to those who will not enter the kingdom of God.

So can you be gay and Christian? If we mean by that practicing same-sex sexual behaviors—look, only God can judge your heart, just [as] only God can judge my heart, but Paul puts the practice of that behavior in terms of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. That's something we need to take very, very seriously.” (McDowell 2017)

The Bible does not say same sex attraction is a sin, but how do we respond? Growing up, I was attracted to multiple girls and fell in and out of love with several, but I did not act out on that attraction, doing so is defined in the scripture as a sin.

But for the church dealing with Thyatira, the culture is beginning to be a bit overwhelming. No different today.

The nation's attitudes toward gay marriage have continued to soften over time, faster than many social analysts expected. In 2003, 54 percent of survey respondents considered two homosexual men living

together with a child to be a family; by 2010, the figure had escalated to 68 percent. (Barna, Futurecast: What Today's Trends Mean for Tomorrow's World 2011, 33)

Our task today is uncompromising integration with the people of this nation, establishing and maintaining safeguards so that we might not be absorbed by the world. (Lutzer 2018, 60)

And that is getting harder and harder to do. Peter nailed the world of the church in the last days and he identified the Thyatiran problem.

2 Peter 2:1–3

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.” (NASB95)

We find ourselves in the same place as King Josiah when his engineers and workers found the Torah in the Temple. What do we do? King Josiah repented and sought the Lord and even though the revival did not impact all of Israel, it did result in a Daniel, an Ezekiel and others.

Zechariah 1:3–4

“Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Return to Me,” declares the LORD of hosts, “that I may return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. “Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.”’ But they did not listen or give heed to Me,” declares the LORD.” (NASB95)

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.” (NASB95)

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (NASB95)

Works Cited

- Ankerberg, John. 2008. *The Facts on Halloween Updated Edition (The Facts On Series)*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.
- Barna, George. 2016. *America at the Crossroads: Explosive Trends Shaping America's Future and What You Can Do About It*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group.
- . 2011. *Futurecast: What Today's Trends Mean for Tomorrow's World*. Austin, TX: Barna an Imprint of Tyndale House Publishers.
- Barton, George A. 1919. *The Religions of the World*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Bissett, David J. 2009. "Because Men Love Darkness: Culture's Dangerous Infatuation with Halloween." *Puritan Reformed Journal* 1 (2).
- Caesar, C. Julius. 1919. "The Gallic War." In *The Loeb Classical Library*, by E. Capps ed., T. E. Page, W. H. D. Rouse and H. J. Edwards trans. London: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Cairns, Alan. 2002. *Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Belfast: Ambassador Emerald International.
- Crooke, W. 1908-1926. *Ancestor-Worship and Cult of the Dead*. Vol. 1, in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, by James Hastings ed., John A. Selbie and Louis H. Gray. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Got Questions Ministries. 2002-2013. *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.
- Jackson ed., Samuel Macauley. 1908-1914. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: Embracing Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology and Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Biography from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. New York, NY: Funk & Wagnalls.
- Jastrow Jr., Morris. 1898. *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*. Boston, MA: Ginn & Company Publishers.
- Keel, John. 2013. *Operation Trojan Horse: The Classic Breakthrough Study of UFOs*. San Antonio, TX: Anomalist Books.
- Koch, Kurt E. 1986. *Occult ABC: Exposing Occult Practices and Ideologies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.
- Lutzer, Erwin. 2018. *The Church in Babylon: Heeding the Call to Be a Light in the Darkness*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.
- Macler, F. 1908-1926. *Festivals and Fasts (Celtic)*. Vol. 5, in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, by James Hastings ed, John A. Selbie and Louis H. Gray. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- McDowell, Sean. 2017. "AP317 A Biblical Response to Homosexuality." *Logos Mobile Education*. Lexham Press. Bellingham, WA.
- M'Clintock, John, and James Strong. 1880. "All Souls Day." In *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, Publishers.
- Orr ed., James. 1999. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: 1915 Edition*. Albany, OR: Ages Software.
- Russian Synodal Translation. 1956. *Русский Синодальный Перевод (1876/1956)*. Logos Edition.
- Soanes, Catherine, and Angus Stevenson, . 2004. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wessels, Antonie. 2001. "Chapter 12: Comparative Inculturations." In *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, by Alan Kreider. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

