**Trick or Treat?**

(John 7:7-10 KJV)

***7****Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.****8****All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.****9****I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.****10****The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

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ell let’s be perfectly honest that we know that fall has arrived as the days continue to get shorter and as the leaves descend from the trees and as the weather transition from a fiery furnace of summer to a winter chill. The day is fast approaching that our children will literally fill the street dressed as their favorite characters in search of the house that is giving away the best candy in town. And this celebration in fact might cause your mind to travel back down memory lane of your own childhood out trick or treating. As our children prepare for Halloween their hope is that they will receive a piece of candy. Yet, there is always the risk that they will be cheated out their candy by some greedy person or worse yet, be poisoned by some maniac. “Trick or Treat” has inevitable consequences, either positive or negative.

Some trace the origins of present day "trick-or-treat" to Samhain (The Pagan Lord of the Dead), which was the supreme night of demonic jubilation. Whereby the spirits of the dead would rise out of their graves and wander the countryside, trying to return to the homes where they formerly lived. Moreover, frightened villagers tried to appease these wandering spirits by offering them gifts of fruit and nuts. They began the tradition of placing plates of the finest food and bits of treats that the household had to offer on their doorsteps, as gifts, to appease the hunger of the ghostly wanderers. If not placated, villagers feared that the spirits would assassinate their flocks and deliberately destroy their property.

Here’s something worth noting—don’t dress up like Dracula! Did you know he was a real person? He lived from 1431 to 1476. During his six year reign this demented maniac massacred 100,000 men, women and children in the most hideous ways. He devised a plan to rid his country of the burden of people who were beggars, handicapped, sick and aged.

One day Dracula he invited them to a feast at one of his palaces. And Dracula fed them well and got them drunk. He then pulled a Jim Jones on the people by asking them, "Do you want to be without cares, lacking nothing in this world?" They replied by saying "YES!" Then Dracula politely ordered the palace boarded up with the people on the inside and set it on fire and burn them alive. In fact, no one escaped— and to this day this tragic event is formally known as the Hunted House.

The overwhelming majority of Halloween Heroes are evil, demented or demonic. That should not surprise us. Halloween is the devil’s day—or as I would say, “The Devils’ Birthday!” Surprisingly Paganisms groups, Atheists, and churches of Satanism celebrate on October 31st the “Devil’s Birthday” The Devil Birthday is the Trick and the day in which we celebrate Jesus’ Birthday is the Treat.

This is why some followers of Christ have chosen to completely disassociate with anything to do with Halloween from trick or treating to handing out candy. They will abandon their homes, by disabling their poach lights and go out for the night so they don’t have any appearance of associating with evil showing up at their doorsteps.

Furthermore others followers of Christ view the whole thing as no longer having the pagan influence that it used to have so they feel free to engage in any aspect of Halloween without complications. So I want to ask today if there is teaching that can give us guidance for how we can decide what is best for us and most honoring to Christ in this particular scripture.

Looking at the verses of this chapter in context, we see that Jesus is presenting Himself as the Good Shepherd. He is essentially telling the Pharisees that He is Messiah, the same Lord that David called “my Shepherd” in Psalm 23:1.

In fact, just prior to Jesus’ discussion of shepherds and sheep, He had healed a man born blind (John 9). The man was taken to the Pharisees, who investigated the healing but refused to acknowledge Jesus as the healer; in fact, they mocked the healed man for trusting Jesus. When Jesus heard what happened, He went to the previously blind man, revealed Himself as the Son of Man, and accepted the man’s worship of Him.

Then Jesus said*, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind”* (John 9:39). And some Pharisees overheard this and, taking offense, asked, “What? Are we blind too?” (John 9:40). Jesus replied, *“If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains. Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.* *The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep”* (John 9:41—10:2). What Jesus was trying to indicate was—there are some who loves to Trick but He's the Treat that turns the Trick around? So my question to you is, "Are you a Trick or Treat?"