

Be a Jack O' Lantern for God

Hosea 8

Did you know that there are a lot of similarities between what God does with His people and what we do with pumpkins for Halloween?

The process of taking a pumpkin & turning it into a Jack O' Lantern parallels the process of God taking Israel from who they were, to who He called them to be!

For instance...

- Just as we go out into a field, filled pumpkins, and choose for ourselves one to take home, so to God has chosen one nation - Israel, out of all the other nations of the world, to be His very own!

- Though there may be better options out there, we choose a particular pumpkin, so to God chooses a particular people based on His own criteria!

There were far more qualified, gifted, & influential people than Israel, but God wanted to show the world His glory by choosing them!

- Just as we dust off & wipe clean the pumpkin we choose from the field, so too does God wipe clean Israel's past & remove their dirt and filth!

What the pumpkin/Israel looked like out in the field didn't disqualify it/them from the purpose for which we/God have/had for it/them!

- Just as we choose a pumpkin to put on display in our homes, God had chosen Israel to give them a place of prominence in His home/Kingdom!

God is building His Kingdom here on earth, & He has chosen to use His people to play a significant role in it!

How should Israel have responded to God for what He had done for them?

But God didn't stop there, it wasn't just about from where He had taken them, it was where/what He was leading them to—who they would become!

A Jack O' Lantern is more than a cleaned-up pumpkin put out on display! So too, God's people were called to be more than just a chosen, clean-up!

God wanted to...

- Give His people ears to hear His voice, to come to know Him personally!
God's Law was spoken to Moses in order that Israel might know Him

- Give His people eyes to see Him clearly, & the world around them!

God gave Israel His Word as a lens through which to see the truth!

- Give His people a nose to smell the sweet aroma that is pleasing to God!
But it is more than just burnt offerings, it's a life of obedience!

- Give His people a mouth that brings forth praise from the overflow of their hearts! It's more than a song, it's a response of a changed heart!

God wants to make His people into Jack O' Lanterns for Him, but there are two things that still have to happen before that gets accomplished! Any guesses?

1) All the yucky stuff on the inside needs to be cleaned out!

A shiny outside doesn't make for a good Jack O' Lantern, only an emptied out inside can provide what is needed to become one!

Without this step, our ears are clogged, our eyes are blinded, our nose is congested & our mouths only spill out that which is on the inside!

You can clean up the outside, but if it's still yucky on the inside, the yuck will spill over eventually! See the problem with Israel/us!

We need a thorough interior cleaning, even a new heart transplant, if we ever hope to become that which God has created us for!

2) There is still one more thing needed - we need the light of Jesus Christ to be placed within us, so that we can shine God's light for all the world to see!

A "Jack O' Lantern" w/out a lantern/light is nothing but a Jack! A Christian w/out the light of Jesus shining forth is nothing more than a Dan...

Israel failed to be who God called them to be because they were too content being just shiny pumpkins! Is the same true for us today?

Are we just pumpkins, drawing attention to ourselves, but failing to become the Jack O' Lanterns that God calls us to be?

We can dress the outside of a pumpkin to look like a Jack O' Lantern, but if it's only on the surface it won't stick! The whirlwind of God will expose it!

"For they sow the wind, & they shall reap the whirlwind!" – Hosea 8:7

We are a chosen people, chosen for a purpose - to be a light shining into the darkness! If we don't look like a Jack O' Lantern on Halloween, leading others to God's House/His Kingdom, then we aren't who God has chosen us to be!

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