

The Truth Behind Valentine's Day

St. Valentine's Day is the world's "holiday of love." Since the Bible states that God is love (I John 4:8, 16), does He approve of the celebration of this day? Does He want His people—true Christians—partaking of the candy and cards, or any customs associated with this day?

When God says He wants you to live life abundantly (John 10:10), does that include celebrating a festive, seemingly harmless holiday like Valentine's Day? The God who gives us everything—life, food, drink, the ability to think for ourselves, etc.—surely approves of St. Valentine's Day, the holiday for lovers to exchange gifts—right?

Do not be so certain. Do not assume anything. Do not even take this article's word for it. Go to history books and encyclopedias. Go to the Bible. Then you will know the *real truth* behind St. Valentine's Day. And you will know what God expects you to do about it!

Valentine's Past

Like *Christmas, Easter, Halloween, New Year's* and other holidays of this world, *St. Valentine's Day* is another attempt to "whitewash" perverted customs and observances of pagan gods and idols by "Christianizing" them.

As innocent and harmless as St. Valentine's Day may appear, its traditions and customs originate from two of the most sexually perverted pagan festivals of ancient history: Lupercalia and the feast day of Juno Februata.

Celebrated on February 15, Lupercalia (known as the "festival of sexual license") was held by the ancient Romans in honor of Lupercus, god of fertility and husbandry, protector of herds and crops, and a mighty hunter—especially of wolves. The Romans believed that Lupercus would protect Rome from roving bands of wolves, which devoured livestock and people.

Assisted by Vestal Virgins, the Luperci (male priests) conducted purification rites by sacrificing goats and a dog in the Lupercal cave on Palatine Hill, where the Romans believed the twins Romulus and Remus had been sheltered and nursed by a she-wolf before they eventually founded Rome. Clothed in loincloths made from sacrificed goats and smeared in their blood, the Luperci would run about Rome, striking women with *februa*, thongs made from skins of the sacrificed goats. The Luperci believed that the floggings purified women and guaranteed their fertility and ease of childbirth. *February* derives from *februa* or “means of purification.”

To the Romans, February was also sacred to Juno Februata, the goddess of febris (“fever”) of love, and of women and marriage. On February 14, billets (small pieces of paper, each of which had the name of a teen-aged girl written on it) were put into a container. Teen-aged boys would then choose one billet at random. The boy and the girl whose name was drawn would become a “couple,” joining in erotic games at feasts and parties celebrated throughout Rome. After the festival, they would remain sexual partners for the rest of the year. This custom was observed in the Roman Empire for centuries.

Whitewashing Perversion

In A.D. 494, Pope Gelasius renamed the festival of Juno Februata as the “Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary.” The date of its observance was later changed from February 14 to February 2, then changed back to the 14. It is also known as Candlemas, the Presentation of the Lord, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin and the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

After Constantine had made the Roman church’s brand of Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire (A.D. 325), church leaders wanted to do away with the pagan festivals of the people. Lupercalia was high on their list. But the Roman citizens thought otherwise.

It was not until A.D. 496 that the church at Rome was able to do anything about Lupercalia. Powerless to get rid of it, Pope Gelasius instead changed it from

February 15 to the 14th and called it St. Valentine's Day. It was named after one of that church's saints, who, in A.D. 270, was executed by the emperor for his beliefs.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "At least three different Saint Valentines, all of them martyrs, are mentioned in early martyrologies under the date of 14 February. One is described as a priest at Rome, another as bishop of Interamna (modern Terni), and these two seem both to have suffered in the second half of the third century and to have been buried on the Flaminian Way, but at different distances from the city...Of the third Saint Valentine, who suffered in Africa with a number of companions, nothing is further known." Several biographies of different men named Valentine were merged into one "official" St. Valentine.

The church whitewashed Lupercalia even further. Instead of putting the names of girls into a box, the names of "saints" were drawn by both boys and girls. It was then each person's duty to emulate the life of the saint whose name he or she had drawn. This was Rome's vain attempt to "whitewash" a pagan observance by "Christianizing" it, which God has not given man the power or authority to do. Though the church at Rome had banned the sexual lottery, young men still practiced a much toned-down version, sending women whom they desired handwritten romantic messages containing St. Valentine's name.

Over the centuries, St. Valentine's Day cards became popular, especially by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These cards were painted with pictures of Cupid and hearts, and meticulously decorated with lace, silk or flowers.

First Man Called Valentine

But who was the original Valentine? What does the name Valentine mean? Valentine comes from the Latin *Valentinus*, which derives from *valens*—"to be strong, powerful, mighty." The Bible describes a man with a similar title: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a *mighty one* in the earth. He was a *mighty hunter* before

the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the *mighty hunter* before the Lord” (Gen. 10:8-9). He was said to have hunted with bow and arrow.

As mentioned, the Romans celebrated Lupercalia to honor the hunter god Lupercus. To the Greeks, from whom the Romans had copied most of their mythology, Lupercus was known as Pan, the god of light. The Phoenicians worshipped the same deity as Baal, the sun god. Baal was one of many names or titles for Nimrod, a mighty hunter, especially of wolves. He was also the founder and first lord of Babel (Gen. 10:10-12). Defying God, Nimrod was the originator of the Babylonian Mystery Religion, whose mythologies have been copied by the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans and a multitude of other ancient peoples. Under different names or titles—Pan, Lupercus, Saturn, Osiris—Nimrod is the strong man and hunter-warrior god of the ancients.

But what does the heart symbol have to do with a day honoring Nimrod/Valentine?

The title *Baal* means “lord” or “master,” and is mentioned throughout the Bible as the god of pagans. God warned His people not to worship or even tolerate the ways of Baal (Nimrod). In ancient Chaldean (the language of the Babylonians), *bal*, which is similar to *Baal*, meant, “heart.” This is where the Valentine heart symbol originated.

Now notice the name *Cupid*. It comes from the Latin verb *cupere*, meaning “to desire.” Cupid was the son of Venus, Roman goddess of beauty and love. Also known as Eros in ancient Greece, he was the son of Aphrodite. According to myth, he was responsible for impregnating numerous goddesses and mortals. Cupid was a child-like archer (remember, Nimrod was a skilled archer). Mythology describes Cupid as having both a cruel and happy personality. He would use his invisible arrows, tipped with gold, to strike unsuspecting men and women, causing them to fall madly in love. He did not do this for their benefit, but to drive them crazy with intense passion, to make their lives miserable, and to laugh at the results.

Many of the gods of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Assyrians and others were modeled after one man—Nimrod.

But what does this have to do with us today? Why should we be concerned with what happened in the past?

What God Thinks

Read what God commands His people concerning pagan customs and traditions: “Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people are vain” (Jer. 10:2-3). Also notice Christ’s words in Matthew 15:9: “...in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Throughout the Bible, God describes “heathens” as those who worship things that He had created (animals, the sun, the moon, stars, trees, etc.), or man-made idols, or *anything but* the one true God. He calls such people and their practices pagan. True Christians understand that God hates any customs, practices and traditions that are rooted in paganism.

But just how serious is God about paganism?

When He rescued the twelve tribes of Israel from brutal slavery and led them out of Egypt, He commanded them, “After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwelt, shall you not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, shall you not do: neither shall you walk in their ordinances” (Lev. 18:3). God demanded the Israelites not to defile themselves with the pagan practices and customs of surrounding nations (vs. 24-29). “Therefore shall you keep Mine ordinance, that you commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that you defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God” (vs. 30).

God cursed Egypt—a nation of nature-worshippers—with ten plagues and freed Israel from slavery. He rescued Israel from Pharaoh’s army by parting the Red Sea and leading His people to safety. He fed the Israelites manna—special bread made by God—from heaven. He protected them from battle-tested Gentile armies, delivered them into the Promised Land and drove out their enemies.

How did Israel treat God in return? “Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Your mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea...They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert...They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their Savior, which had done great things in Egypt; wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea...they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word: But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord ...They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their intentions” (Psa. 106:7, 13-14, 19-22, 24-25, 28-29).

God explicitly commanded Israel to cast out and utterly destroy all nations that occupied the Promised Land (Canaan). Above all, His people were not to make political alliances with them or marry into their families (Deut. 7:1-3, 5, 16). “For they will turn away your sons from following Me, that they may serve other gods” (vs. 4).

But the Israelites thought they knew better than God. They decided to do things their own way. “They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yes, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils [demons], and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions” (Psa. 106:34-39).

To wake them up and get them back on track as the model nation He had originally intended, God gave Israel over to their enemies. Israel repented and cried out to God. God rescued them. With their bellies full and lives protected, the Israelites went back to pursuing other gods. God punished Israel again. Israel repented and cried out to God.

And so went the deliverance-idolatry-punishment-repentance cycle (vs. 40-46), until finally, God had no other choice but to divorce unfaithful Israel (Jer. 3:6-11).

He used the Assyrians, one of the most brutal warrior nations in history, to invade, conquer, enslave and relocate the entire northern kingdom of Israel (II Kings 17). Having “disappeared” from history, the modern-day descendants of those ten “lost” tribes are unaware of their true identity even to this day.

Later, God sent the southern kingdom of Judah (mainly the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi) into Babylonian exile (II Kings 24 and 25). Because they kept (at least physically) the true Sabbath, which is a special sign that identifies the one true God and His people (Ex. 31:12-18), the Jews were able to retain their true identity.

The Israelites were severely punished because they lusted after pagan customs, rituals, traditions and practices. As you can see, God does not take paganism lightly.

Why Paganism Is Wrong

Just why does God hate anything that resembles pagan customs? Is it possible to “whitewash” or “Christianize” pagan practices and make them clean? Is it okay to practice pagan customs as long as you “worship God”?

Notice what God says in Leviticus chapter 18. After rescuing Israel from slavery, God warned them not to practice the customs they had picked up in Egypt, or learn the ways, customs and traditions of the Gentile nations that they would encounter in the Promised Land (vs. 1-3). Instead, God commanded Israel to follow His ways (vs. 4-5).

God then describes the pagan ways of these ungodly nations in great detail. In verses 7-20, He condemns all kinds of heterosexual sex relations that fall outside the holy boundaries of marriage—incest, fornication, adultery, etc. In verses 22-23, God condemns homosexuality and bestiality. Together, these sins break down and destroy the family unit that God had so lovingly created and instituted.

Notice what God links to these perversions: “And you shall not let any of your seed [children] pass through the fire to Molech, neither shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord” (vs. 21). God ties in the perverse sexual practices of ungodly, pagan nations with human sacrifices—parents offering the lives of their children to pagan gods!

The Bible shows that Israel not only disobeyed God and wholeheartedly embraced the sexual immorality of the Gentiles, they even went a step further.

“And they have turned unto Me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction. But they set their abominations in the house [the temple at Jerusalem], which is called by My name, to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into My mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin” (Jer. 32:33-35).

Imagine. Israel committed a sin so vile, so disgusting, that it even shocked God! But that was then. What about today? Surely, parents do not sacrifice their children to pagan gods today—or do they?

Do not be so certain. Perhaps their *lives* are not being sacrificed—but what about their *innocence*?

Parents today expect their little ones to “fall in love” and have boyfriends and girlfriends. They think it is “cute” when little boys and girls hold hands and act like a couple, sneaking a kiss or two when no one is watching. Some parents get worried when their kids do not show romantic interest in the opposite sex. They constantly ask them, “Do you have a boyfriend yet?” or “Who’s your girlfriend?”

Yet these same parents are surprised when their teen-aged “little girl” gets pregnant. Or catches a sexually transmitted disease. Or gets an abortion behind their back.

St. Valentine's Day is just one of many tools the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4) uses to get parents to sacrifice the *innocence of their children*.

When little boys and girls draw each other's names in a lottery and send Valentine cards and gifts to each other, declaring their "love," they are learning the first stages of intimate relations that the Creator God designed specifically for emotionally mature adults. Instead of embracing the carefree innocence of youth, growing up without the headaches and heartaches of adulthood (finding a job, paying bills, marriage, raising a family, etc.), children today are taught to lust after each other. They are caught up in a daily drama of "If-you-loved-me-you'd-sleep-with-me; I'm-pregnant; It's-not-mine, she-had-an-abortion." By the time they reach adulthood, virtually every shred of innocence, sincerity and moral decency has been stripped from them. Emotionally drained, they have world-weary, "been there, done that" attitudes. And their lives are just beginning.

This is why we live in a world where a teen-aged virgin is a rare find. Where what used to be called "shacking up" and "living in sin" is now simply "living together." Where sex is nothing more than meaningless physical recreation—no emotional attachments, no cares, no concerns. Where people change sex partners as conveniently as they change clothes. Where unmarried twenty- or thirty-somethings have had at least *five* sexual partners—and that is considered a low number, especially in the United States. Where men are not referred to as "my husband," or "my fiancé," but as "my second baby's father."

How pathetic!

Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9) in multiple ways—especially when it comes to intimate relationships. St. Valentine's Day is just one of his tools for deception.

“Come Out of Her, My People”

Concerning the near future, when man's Satan-influenced world is about to collapse, God declares, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils [demons], and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of

her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed [increased] rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (Rev. 18:2-3).

Concerning this pagan, satanic system, God commands true Christians, “Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues” (vs. 4).

St. Valentine’s Day originates from the ancient paganism of this Satan-influenced world. It is designed to deceive mankind by appealing to fleshly, carnal desires—or, as the Bible calls them, *the works of the flesh*. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest [made obvious], which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry...drunkenness, revellings, and such like” (Gal. 5:19-21). Do any of these sound like Lupercalia to you?

Ultimately, “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” A true Christian is focused on God’s soon-coming kingdom (Matt. 6:33) and the world to come—not on the fleshly cravings of this world. A true Christian must strive to “put off the old man” and actively imitate the perfect, righteous example of Jesus Christ. A Christian knows that he must actively come out of this world, out of its pagan-infested customs, practices and traditions.

Christians do not celebrate St. Valentine’s Day!