The Shocking Truth about *Valentine's Day*

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Every year, during the month of February, millions of people around the world exchange cards, candy, flowers, jewelry, and other terms of endearment in a celebration known as Saint Valentine's Day. During this time couples will go out on dates, lovers will share intimacies, friends and family members will exchange hugs and children experiencing puppy love may even receive their first kiss. While the Bible says that "God is love," and Valentine's Day has a premise of affection, the observance actually has nothing in common with the love of God. Instead, its celebration is filled with lust and materialism.

The Greeting Card Association estimates that approximately one billion valentine cards are sent each year. The U.S. National Census calculates that Americans consume nearly 3.5 million tons of candy annually and a large portion of this is purchased for Valentine's Day. According to the Floral Index, 110 million roses are sold in the U.S. on Valentine's Day and American's spend $18 billion on other gifts.

A virtual love-frenzy seems to take place during this time of year, but how did this holiday come into existence? When and where did it originate? Why does it occur on February 14th? How did it become associated with a supposed saint? Did a legendary Valentine even exist?

The origin and meaning of this celebration need not be a mystery. It is possible for you to know the shocking truth about Valentine's Day!

The Original Valentine

While examining the history of Valentine's Day, we find a celebration that dates back to the very origin of paganism itself. Many historians and religious scholars trace this festival all the way back to Ham's grandson Nimrod, the founder of Babylon and mystery religion. As Moses wrote:

> Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (Genesis 10:8-10).

The religious practices propagated by Nimrod's empire need not to be obscure. This man was known as a "mighty one" and a "mighty hunter." Interestingly, the name Valentine comes from the Latin *valens* meaning strong, vigorous, and powerful. These descriptive terms are synonymous with "mighty" attributed to Nimrod who became the subject of innumerable legends. Along with his mother Semiramis, Nimrod was eventually worshipped as a god for thousands of years after his death. Traces of his worship are still found in many religious practices today including Christmas, Buddhism, Easter, Hinduism, and Valentine's Day.

God punished the people who followed Nimrod as they were building the tower of Babel. The project was abandoned after the people began speaking different languages and they migrated to various places of the earth (Gen. 11:6-9). Wherever they went they took Nimrod's mystery religion with them. In their new locations they erected false gods and observed rituals based on what they learned under the rule of Nimrod in the land of Shinar.

As a result of the wide dispersion, and the fact that the people now spoke different languages, Nimrod came to be known by many different names. He gave rise to deities such as Marduk, Asar, Dumuzi, Orian, Pan, Gilgamesh, Osiris, Eros, Cupid, and Baal to

name just a few. Speaking of Nimrod's infamy, Ray C. Stedman stated the following in the article *God's Funnel*:

> The account zooms in on an individual named Nimrod, who is called a great hunter. He is a rather mysterious figure, of great importance in ancient history. He is the founder, as we are told, of both Babylon and Nineveh, the two great cities of antiquity which ultimately became enemies of Israel. The prominent thing said about him here is that he was a mighty man, "a mighty hunter before the LORD." Nimrod evidently gained a great reputation as such a hunter, but he was more than a hunter of wild animals. The Jewish Talmud helps us here, for it says that he was "a hunter of the souls of men." By the founding of Babylon and Nineveh we have a hint given of the nature of this man... It now suggests that Nimrod was one of these "mighty men," and therefore introduced a perverted, degraded form of religion into the world. It began at Babylon, spread to Nineveh, and can be traced in history as it subsequently spread throughout the whole of the earth. Thus, in this man Nimrod, we have the seed of idolatry and false religion coming in again after the flood (http://www.raystedman.org/old-testament/genesis/ gods-funnel, ret. 2/9/2017).

Nimrod was at the heart of Babylon's rise both physically and spiritually. In the Babylonian tongue the word for heart is *bal*. Baal, the pagan god mentioned frequently in the Bible, is simply another title for this catalyst of false religion—Nimrod. According to *Lempriere's Classical Dictionary*, Pan was directly connected to the Lupercalia and, "according to some is the same as Faunus" (p. 477).

Another link in Nimrod's transformation to Baal is found in the false god Marduk. Dropping the first consonant of Nimrod's name and lining up the remaining letters, you end up with MRD which is a root term for Marduk. Researchers for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* documented the link between Marduk and Baal, and the proliferation of different gods springing from this one person:

> Marduk, in Mesopotamian religion, the chief god of the city of Babylon and the national god of Babylonia; as such, he was eventually called simply Bel, or Lord... A poem, known as *Enuma elish* and dating from the reign of Nebuchadrezzar I (1119–1098 bce), relates Marduk's rise to such preeminence that he was the god of 50 names, each one that of a deity or of a divine attribute (https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marduk, ret. 2/10/2017).

The pagan god Baal is well documented in both secular and biblical history. The Israelites were seduced into the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, who many agree were originally known as Nimrod and Semiramis. The book of Judges records Israel's sin of serving these two false gods stating:

> And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel (Judges 2:12-14).

The many fables and deities that sprang from Nimrod also included Nimrod's mother Semiramis queen of Babylon. Semiramis is said to have lusted after her son and eventually seduced and married him. One example of a false god springing forth from this incestuous relationship is found in the god Osiris. Osiris is literally the Egyptian name for Nimrod and this popular Egyptian god was the husband of his mother.

Even more significant, after Nimrod's death, Semiramis became pregnant. She claimed that her pregnancy was induced without intercourse and that her child was the rebirth of Nimrod. This claim became the foundation of belief in a virgin birth long before Christ walked the earth. From this we can see a clever attempt by Satan to mislead people in anticipation of the genuine immaculate conception of Christ that would take occur thousands of

years later. Alexander Hislop noted that the worship of Semiramis and Nimrod eventually spread throughout much of the world:

> From Babylon, this worship of the Mother and the Child spread to the ends of the earth. In Egypt, the Mother and the Child were worshipped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India, even to this day, as Isa and Iswara; in Asia, as Cybele and Deoius; in Pagan Rome, as Fortuna and Jupiter-puer, or Jupiter, the boy' in Greece, as Ceres, the great Mother, with the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the boy Plutus in her arms; and even in Thibet, in China, and Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child as devoutly worshipped in Papal Rom itself; Shing Moo, the Holy Mother in China, being represented with a child in her arms, and a glory around her, exactly as if a Roman Catholic artist had been employed to set her up (*The Two Babylons*, 1871, 7th ed. pp. 20-21).

The Lupercalia

As the people were scattered abroad from Babel, the legends of Semiramis and Nimrod went with them becoming the catalyst for the creation of a variety of gods. These gods were actually the old gods of Babylon, but they were given new names according to the language now spoken by the migrants. This is clearly demonstrated by the way in which the folklore of Nimrod gave rise to the pagan gods Lupercus, Pan, Februus, and Faunus which are all associated with the Lupercalia—a pre-Roman festival that became Saint Valentine's Day. The Lupercalia was originally celebrated on February 15th with preceding activities on the 14th.

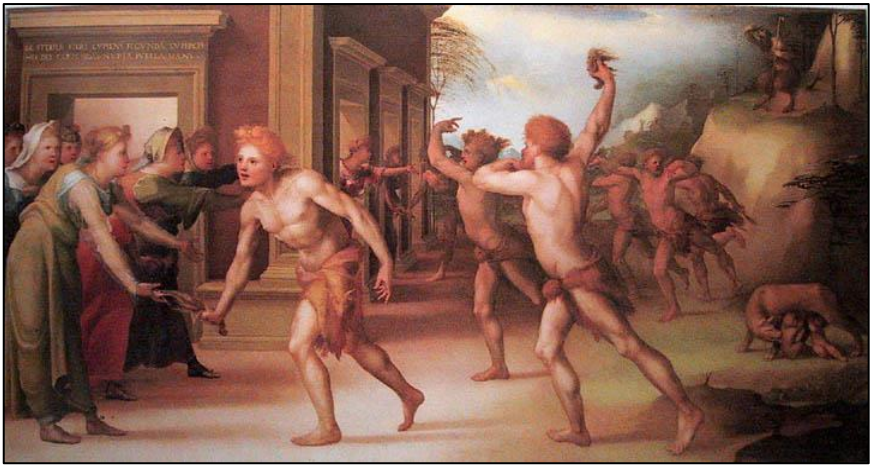
Lupercus was a god of shepherds and was called upon to protect their flocks and herds. He was known as a mighty mountain wolf hunter, a title very similar to the description of Nimrod found in the book Genesis. There is also evidence that Nimrod traveled to this area to hunt wolves as the Italian Apennine Mountains were at one time known as "the Mountains of Nembrod." Thus a god called Lupercus was fabricated from the Babylonian traditions found

among the people residing in the hills of modern Rome. By this, Nimrod became honored in their festival of Lupercalia.

As a sequel to the celebration of the Saturnalia, the Lupercalia was a festival that also honored the legendary founders of Rome—Romulus and Remus. Falling on February 15th, the holiday was celebrated in anticipation of spring and was considered a religious rite to promote purification and the fertility of land, animals, and people. The official ceremony took place in Rome at the foot of the Palatine Hill, at the cave of Lupercal, where it is said that the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were nurtured by a she-wolf during their early years of life. The tales surrounding these brothers were filled with sensuality and idolatry and were included as a part of the Lupercalia.

The religious ceremonies were directed by Luperci—meaning brothers of the wolf who were priests of Faunus. The famous Roman general and politician Mark Antony was once a member of this priesthood. It began with Vestal Virgins offering cakes, called mola salsa, made from the first ears of last year's grain harvest. Two naked young men, assisted by the Vestals, then sacrificed a dog and one or two goats. Goats were used because of the symbol of sexual vigor and Lupercus was also considered a god of shepherds. A dog was used because it was considered to be the flock's main defender against wolves. The blood from the animals was smeared on the foreheads of the young men and wiped off with wool or goat's hair dipped in milk. A sacrificial feast followed, after which the youths then girded themselves with loincloths made from the goat's skin.

The goatskin was also used to fashion small whips called "februa." The young men would then begin laughing as they gallivanted around the hilly boundaries of the city—striking men and women with the februa who would line up along the way. The lascivious act was believed to provide fertility, easy child birth, and protection from curses or bad luck to anyone the februa touched. It is said that some women would even bare their nakedness to the februa in hopes of obtaining better results.



Publius Ovidius Naso, commonly known as Ovid a famous Latin poet who lived between 43 B.C. and 17 A.D., mentioned this act of striking women with the februa in one of his poems regarding the Lupercalia. He wrote:

> Neither potent herbs, nor prayers, nor magic spells shall make of thee a mother, submit with patience to the blows dealt by a fruitful hand (Ovid, XV. KAL. 15th).

This fertility festival was accompanied by rowdiness and horseplay. One can easily imagine the depravity of the scene as half naked youths dressed only in goat's skin covering their loins frolicked around the city and countryside slapping men, women, and young girls with a whip to encourage fertility. It is not difficult to surmise that fornication would have quickly followed this ceremony in which it was believed that the women had just been made miraculously fertile.

Another false god associated with Nimrod and the Lupercalia was Pan. Portrayed as a vigorous individual, Pan was partly human with several features of a goat. He has been depicted in ancient art as running through the mountains slaying wild animals, seducing young men and women, and sometimes copulating with goats. Because of his Nimrod-like strength, it was

believed that Pan brought great fear upon many of those in his presence. The expression "panic" was derived from this ancient myth. The association of the Lupercalia and Pan was noted by H. J. Rose in his book *Religion in Greece and Rom*e where one of the symbolic acts of the Lupercalia are compared to Pan. While during the ritual of the two male youths, they would gird their naked bodies with loincloths made from sacrificed goatskins:

> This is done by the young men transforming themselves, for the time being, into human he-goats, the very embodiments of sexual vigour and at the same time of pugnacity. It is not by accident that the ancients supposed the performance to take place in honour of a god who might be identified with the Greek Pan, for he too is a he-goat, partly humanised (p. 206).

Another god honored during the Lupercalia was Faunus, and the description given him provides further insight into the supposed purification associated with the holiday. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* described Faunus as:

> An ancient Italian rural deity whose attributes in Roman times were identified with those of the Greek god Pan. Faunus was originally worshiped in the countryside as a bestower of fruitfulness on fields and flocks. A grandson of Saturn, Faunus was typically represented as half man, half goat, a derivation from the Greek Satyr, in the company of similar creatures, known as Fauns. Like Pan,

> Faunus was associated with merriment, and his twice-yearly festivals were marked by revelry and abandon. At the Lupercalia, a festival held partly in his honor each February in Rome well into the Christian era, youths clothed as goats ran through the streets wielding strips of goatskin (https://www.britannica.com/topic/Faunus, ret. 2/9/2017).

This pagan god of fruitfulness was also widely recognized as a god of sexual superiority and thus was viewed as a source of seed bearing to women. The image of half man and half goat was looked upon, in the mystical realm, as the very embodiment of sexual vigor. Being associated with the god Pan is another clue to Faunus' nature. Pan was also a fertility deity and, "Pan was generally represented as a vigorous and lustful figure having the horns, legs, and ears of a goat" (https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-Greek-god, ret. 2/10/2017).

Another pagan god of old was Februus aka Hades—a god of the dead and purification. In his honor the Februalia festivities were held around the same time as the Lupercalia. Februus and Juno Februata were also known as the gods of febris— a term meaning fever as related to passion. The widely used expression of being lovesick probably came from this term.

Because of the many gods and similarities in festivities during this month, deities worshiped at this time were often confused with one another and sometimes thought of as the same.

February

We now see that the title of the month "February" gives insight into the practices of ancient Greece and Rome. February was nominally the last month of the Roman calendar, as the year originally began in March. The term February comes from the Latin *februa* that means "feast of purification." It is the last month of the ancient Roman calendar. As winter began to pass and the days become longer, the festivals of fertility, renewal, and supposed spiritual enlightenment began. John Robertson, an expert on the ancient Roman and modern western calendars, stated:

> The name, Februarius, came about because of the Roman ceremonies for religious purification and expiation which took place during that month in anticipation of the new year; which originally began on March 1 The name, Februarius, came about because of the Roman ceremonies for religious purification and expiation which took place during that month in anticipation of the new year; which originally began on March 1 (http://www.logofiles.com/feb-history.html).

Many clues now fall into play as we consider the pagan gods Juno Februata, Februus, and the goat hide whip of the Lupercalia called the "februa." Although fertility and the lustful acts that followed were a primary function of the Lupercalia, adherents of these beliefs also claimed that their gods would fertilize the land as well as their flocks. James Oliver explained this in his book *Seasonal Feasts and Festivals*, stating:

> The chief purpose of the Lupercalia was to remedy barrenness in women, though in all probability it originated as a rustic purification festival for the protection of the flocks and herds as well as for the promotion of fertility in man, beast and the crops, before it became an urban observance on the Palatine. Thus, the encircling of the settlement by the Luperci girded with the fleece of the sacrificed goats, and carrying the februa, would seem to have been a beating of the bounds in order to trace a magic circle round the city to shut out the evil influences responsible for barrenness, and all other harmful things, such as wolves (p. 178).

Clearly the Lupercalia was a fertility festival filled with mysticism and depravity, but why was it celebrated in mid-February? This is also related to Nimrod who was purported by some to have been born during the 21st century B.C. on the winter solstice equivalent to January 6th in the calendar used today. Custom required a new mother to attend a purification ritual forty days after the child's birth. This tradition of pagans was likely adopted from guidelines previously established among the faithful people of God

as documented in the first books of the Bible (Gen. 26:5; Lev. 12:1-8). With January 6th considered as the birth of Nimrod, the purification ritual for Semiramis would have fallen on a calendar date of February 15th, or on February 14th when considering that each new day began at sunset the evening prior—another custom borrowed from God's people (Gen. 1).

By putting the facts together a trail through time to emerges. The early fertility festivals transitioned into modern expressions as civilization advanced. The roots of Valentine's Day are deeply embedded in ancient pagan purification and fertility festivals. When following the foot prints of this holiday even further back in history, they lead to Nimrod and his perverted relationship with his mother and wife Semiramis.

The Lover's Lottery

Another festivity of ancient times, connected to the Lupercalia, was surnamed the lover's lottery. Celebrated by the youth on the eve of the Lupercalia, this ritual was in honor of Juno Februata queen of the Roman gods. Designated as the goddess of women, love, marriage, childbirth, and sometimes war, Juno's festivals were commonly orgiastic rites of fertility. Interestingly, Juno was often portrayed wearing a goatskin cloak—the same material used to clothe the half-naked youths at the culmination of the Lupercalia ceremony.

During this particular event, names of young girls were written down and placed in urns or jars. A teenage boy would then draw a name and the two would be paired, forming a temporary liaison, for dancing, merry making, and erotic games at feasts and parties throughout Rome. After the festival they were to remain partners for the rest of the year and this sometimes resulted in marriage. James Hastings wrote about this activity in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Volume III*:

> The customs of Valentine's Day have been handed down from the Roman festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated in the month of February, when the names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by men as chance directed. This is the origin of valentines—cards linking

> men and women together for sexual purposes. This festival was characterized in the later Roman period by wanton raillery and unkindled freedom (p. 226).

This custom was observed in the Roman Empire for centuries. It was a tradition performed in anticipation of the rites of spring—a celebration of youthful love.

During the medieval days of chivalry, the lover's lottery was very popular in England. The names of maidens and bachelors were put into separate boxes and drawn out in pairs. The couple exchanged gifts and the girl became the man's valentine. The male often wore his valentine's name on his sleeve and it was his duty to attend and protect her. Today the old adage, to wear your heart on your sleeve means that it is easy for other people to know how you are feeling. This saying is derived from a tradition observed during the medieval lover's lottery where one could easily read the name of the girl the male was paired with on his sleeve.

In other areas both sexes drew from the valentine box. John Brand documented the tradition in his *Observations on Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, stating:

> On the Eve of the 14th of February, St. Valentine's Day, a time when all living nature inclines to couple, the young folks in England and Scotland too, by a very ancient custom, celebrate a little festival that tends to the same end. An equal number of maids and bachelors get together, each writes their true or some feigned name upon separate billets, which they roll up, and draw by way of lots, the maids taking the men's billets, and the men the maids'; so that each of the young men lights upon a girl that he calls his Valentine, and each of the girls upon a young man which she calls her's. By this means each has two Valentines: but the man sticks faster to the Valentine that is fallen to him, than the Valentine to whom he is fallen. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the Valentines give balls and treats to their mistresses, wear their billets several days upon their bosoms or sleeves, and this little sport often ends in love (v. 1, pp. 59-60).

A minor poem was written by John Lydgate during this time stating, "A ballad made... in ways of choosing loves at Saint Valentine's Day." This poem further indicates that the manner of choosing a valentine mate was done by drawing names.

In an effort to downplay the immoral practice of the lover's lottery, the Catholic Church tried to change the activity into something more acceptable by substituting the names of girls with names of saints. The young people would draw a name out of an urn or box and attempt to emulate the saint whose name they had drawn throughout the following year. Alban Butler wrote the following in his book, *Lives of the Saints*:

> To abolish the heathen, lewd, superstitious custom of boys drawing the names of girls, in honour of their goddess Februata Juno, on the 15th of February, several zealous Pastors substituted the names of Saints in billets given on that day. St. Frances de Sales severely forbad the custom of Valentines, or giving boys in writing the names of girls to be admired and attended on by them; and to abolish it, he changed it into giving billets with the names of certain Saints, for them to honour and imitate in a particular manner (p. 539).

By the 14th century this practice had died out and the people reverted back to the use of girl's names. In the 16th century the church once again tried to make Valentine's Day saintly, but it was just as unsuccessful as their first attempt. During the 17th century celebrants began to exchange love notes which became known as valentine cards.

Early valentine cards were made by hand using colored paper, watercolors, and colored inks. Increasingly beautiful handmade valentines were often small works of art, richly decorated with silk, satin or lace, flowers or feathers, and even gold leaf. Cards decorated with black and white pictures painted by factory workers were produced in the early 1800s. In the United States the first mass-produced cards of embossed paper lace were sold by Esther A. Howland in 1847.

The giving of a Valentine card to another person is no less than an extension of the lover's lottery—a practice in honor of the goddess Juno Februata that frequently resulted in fornication.

Today, a card is one of the most common gifts on Valentine's Day. Millions of people across the globe exchange cards expressing fondness, love, or desire for another person and few realize that this is a modern expression of the lover's lottery.

A version of the lover's lottery takes place in schools across America every year. Teachers tell children to choose someone they are fond of and create a valentine card for them. Not desiring anyone to be left out, some teachers will put all the names of their students in a box and draw out names of boys and girls to be paired up. Given the history of this activity, no true believer, or their children, should participate in what began as a licentious heathen festival.

Christianizing Pagan Festivals

Like many secular holidays, the feast of Juno Februata and the celebration of the Lupercalia were eventually dressed in Christian apparel. Saint Valentine's Day and the traditions associated with it are the result of an attempt by the Roman Catholic Church to whitewash idolatrous customs. This process began during the third and fourth centuries when Christianity became a state sponsored religion in the Roman Empire.

By this act, vast numbers of pagans began to stream into the church. The clergy half-heartedly attempted to steer them away from their cherished holidays, but the deep seated passions of the masses was a battle the ministry did not want to fight. In an attempt to build bridges, the church decided to give pagan festivals a makeover. In his book *Observations of the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, John Brand stated this well known fact.

> Thus, at the first promulgation of Christianity to the Gentile nations, though the new converts yielded through the force of truth to conviction, yet they could not be persuaded to relinquish many of their superstitions, which rather than forego altogether, they chose to blend and incorporate with the new faith. And hence it is that Christian, or rather Papal, Rome has borrowed her rites,

> notions, and ceremonies, in the most luxuriant abundance, from ancient and Heathen Rome… (preface, xi).

In *Clavis Calendaria, Vol. 1,* John Brand also stated that, "for almost every pagan ceremony, some Christian rite was introduced" (p. 196). This is definitely the case when it comes to our modern Saint Valentine's Day.

There were initially two rituals instituted by the Roman Catholic Church during the month of February. Both were designed to replace similar festivals observed by the pagans; the Lupercalia and the lover's lottery. Obviously these celebrations had no place in the new professing Christian order and they were the first to be reworked. In the book *Customs and Holidays around the World*, author Lavinia Dobler stated:

> As far back as 496, Pope Gelasius changed Lupercalia on Feb. 15 to St. Valentine's Day on Feb. 14 (p. 172).

This statement is one of many sources relating that, late in the 5th century, the papacy transformed the Lupercalia and the lover's lottery. During this alteration, a supposed saint named Valentine was chosen as the patron saint of lovers. They also created a new feast called the Purification of the Virgin Mary which was later named Candlemas.

Candlemas

In an attempt to change the pagan symbolism of fertility and purification during the month of February, the Roman Catholic Church designed another holiday called the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary. The observance was later called Candlemas. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* states:

> Forty days after the birth of Christ Mary complied with this precept of the law, she redeemed her first-born from the temple (Numbers 18:15), and was purified by the prayer of Simeon the just, in the presence of Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:22 sqq.). No doubt this event, the first solemn introduction of Christ into the house of God, was

> in the earliest times celebrated in the Church of Jerusalem. We find it attested for the first half of the fourth century by the pilgrim of Bordeaux, Egeria or Silvia. The day (14 February) was solemnly kept by a procession to the Constantinian basilica of the Resurrection, a homily on Luke 2:22 sqq., and the Holy Sacrifice. But the feast then had no proper name; it was simply called the fortieth day after Epiphany. This latter circumstance proves that in Jerusalem Epiphany was then the feast of Christ's birth (http://www.newadvent. org/cathen/03245b.htm, ret. 12/13/12).

The Catholic Church admits to observing this day as a form of "purification." In an attempt to justify the observance, they assert that the event had always been celebrated by the early Church in Jerusalem, but "the feast had no proper name." Consider that if such a holiday was ever observed by the apostles and the New Testament Church, there would have been some mention of it in their writings!

What they are trying to avoid is the fact that this feast was observed by pagans for centuries before the birth of Christ. It was the purification of Semiramis which became the Lupercalia. The apostate church tried to conceal this fact because their celebrations were not proper and they actually had a name—the Lupercalia! The church wanted to deny their connection to the ancient celebration. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* continues:

> Pope Sergius I (687-701) introduced a procession for this day… The feast was certainly not introduced by Pope Gelasius to suppress the excesses of the Lupercalia… The blessing of the candles did not enter into common use before the eleventh century; it has nothing in common with the procession of the Lupercalia (ibid).

Despite denial by the Catholic Church, there are many documents showing a connection between their observance and the February pagan festivities, St. Valentine's Day, and Candlemas. In the late 1700s, John Brand wrote the following using a form of language known today as Old English:

> How this candle-bearing on Candlemas Day came first up, the author of our English Festival declareth in this manner: "Somtyme," saith he, "when the Romaines by great myght and royal power conquered all the world, they were so proude, that they forgat God, and made them divers gods after their own lust. And so among all they had a god that they called Mars, that had been tofore a notable knight in battayle; and so they prayed to hym for help... the people prayed and did great worship to his mother, that was called Februa, after which woman much people have opinion that the moneth February is called. Wherefore the second daie of thys moneth is Candlemass Day. The Romaines this night went about the city of Rome with torches and candles brenning in worship of this woman Februa... Then there was a Pope that was called Sergius, and when he saw Christian people drawn to this false maumetry (idolatry) and untrue belief he thought to undo this foule use and custom, and turn it unto God's worship and our Lady's, and gave commandment that all Christian people should come to church and offer up a candle brennyng, in the worship that they did to this woman Februa, and do worship to our Lady and to her Sonne our Lord Jesus Christ. So that now this feast is solemnly hallowed thorowe all Christendome (*Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, vol. 1, p. 44).

Candlemas was NOT a practice of Christ's New Testament Church. Historians agree that the first references to it becoming a church holiday date back to Pope Gelasius in the 5th century and Pope Sergius in the 6th. Even one of their own stated the following in a sermon given in the 16th century:

> Why do we in this feast carry candles? Because the Gentiles dedicated the month of February to the infernal gods… Because the holy fathers could not extirpate the custom, they ordained that Christians should carry about candles in honor of the Blessed Virgin; and thus what was done before in the honor of Ceres [a goddess of grain] is

> now done in honor of the Blessed Virgin (Pope Innocent XII, *The American Book of Days*, p. 77-78).

It is clear these pagan festivals were retained as supposed Christian observances. Candlemas is celebrated on February 15th in the eastern churches but was later moved to February 2nd in the west to coincide with the assertion that Christ was born on December 25th. It is also evident that Saint Valentine's Day was introduced in an attempt to give the feast of Juno Februata and the lover's lottery a face lift, thus Christianizing another licentious festival, but why did the church choose Valentine?

Saint Valentine

After many years of attempts by an apostate church to give the Lupercalia a makeover, a mysterious man named Valentine became the patron saint for the church observance that was to replace the pagan Lupercalia. However, there is no tangible evidence that this man actually existed.

The Catholic Church now recognizes at least three different men they consider to be saints known as Valentine or Valentinus; all of whom are mentioned in their martyrologies under the date of February 14th. One of these was a priest at Rome, another bishop of Interamna (modern Terni), and the third was a man who supposedly suffered persecution while in Africa. Of this third Valentine nothing else is known. Nonetheless, the facts about all three of these men are questionable at best. Their stories are better described as myth or legend. A thorough study shows that conflicting stories have been collected and assembled for each Valentine.

For example, one man is said to have served as a priest during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius II. It is purported that Claudius decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families because they had less desire to leave the military for home. Armed with this belief, the emperor outlawed marriage for a period of time in order to strengthen his military. Valentine is reported to have realized the injustice of this law and continued to perform marriages for lovers in secret. Upon discovery

of Valentine's violation of the law, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Thus Valentine became a saint for lovers.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were being terribly mistreated. According to another legend, Valentine actually sent the first valentine card himself. While in prison, it is said that Valentine fell in love with the jailor's daughter who visited him during his confinement. Before his death he wrote her a letter signed, "From your Valentine," an expression that is widely used today.

The stories behind the Saint Valentine legends are vague and many historians believe that they were simply fabrications enabling the papacy to retain the appeal of the pagan February feast by changing its licentious meaning to a more acceptable image of love. The stories certainly were sympathetic to the Catholic Church by portraying Valentine as a heroic and romantic man. By the middle ages, St. Valentine was one of the most popular figures in England and France.

Modern historians question if a catholic priest named Valentine ever existed. Even if he did exist, it is agreed that there is no evidence that his life resulted in the creation of a lover's holiday. Instead, of being related to an honorable saint, the evidence indicates that Valentine's Day is the result of an adoption of the Lupercalia.

Worshipping the Creation Rather than the Creator

There is an instinct of many birds to choose a mate during the month of February. The anticipation of this natural process added fuel to the observance of these fertility and so-called love festivals. Written in 1380 in Old English, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* reflects the derived link between a natural process and Valentine's Day:

> For this was on Seynt Valentyne's day,
> Whan every foul cometh ther to chese his make.

Because of the phenomenon regarding the pairing of birds for mating, Valentine's Day was considered an ideal occasion for

lovers to exchange love tokens and other forms intimacy. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries much of the French and English literature contained allusions to the practices of Valentine's Day including such famous writers as John Gower and William Shakespeare.

John Donne, the most popular of the English metaphysical poets of the 17th century, wrote this in his work titled, *An Epithalamion, or Marriage Song of the Lady Elizabeth and Count Palatine being Married on St. Valentine's Day.* Notice his use of religious terms reflecting a mixture of theologies in the holiday:

> Hail Bishop Valentine! whose day this is; All the air is thy diocese, and all the chirping choristers and other birds are thy parishioners: Thou marryest ever year the lyric lark and the grave whispering dove; The sparrow that neglects his life for love, the household bird with the red stomarcher; Celebrations thou mak'st the blackbird speed as soon, as doth the goldfinch or the halcyon... This day more cheerfully than ever shine, this day which might inflame thyself, old Valentine!

Once again man has taken a natural process, designed by the great God of the universe and turned it into a false doctrine—a tradition of men! In this case, the wonder and beauty of the birds mating and reproducing is falsely used as an example for the observance of an idolatrous and perverted custom. Performed in the name of love, these various misuses of the body were prophesied centuries ago by the Apostle Paul, who said:

> For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him. Instead, their thoughts turned to worthless things, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Though claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images that looked like mortal human beings, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles. For this reason, God delivered them to sexual impurity as they followed the lusts of their hearts and dishonored their bodies with one another. They exchanged God's truth for a lie and

> worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen (ISV, Romans 1:21-25).

God is the very source and embodiment of real love (1John 4:16) and our love for Him is shown by our obedience to His Word; not the observances honoring sex and fertility which are a part of God's physical creation. Christ pinpoints the error of man's ways, stating:

> In vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).

Valentine's Day is a commandment of men—not God! Blindly following these holidays designed by men can be a grave mistake. Christ stated that if we do this, our worship of Him will be in vain! We must be careful and alert because the natural mind of man focuses on the physical, the things of nature. It should then be expected that the natural mind of man is hostile to God and His spiritual law (Rom. 8:7). By following man's devices, his methods of worship and celebrations, it can only lead us away from the true God.

Symbols of Love - Cupid

When focusing on the various symbols of Valentine's Day, the misleading nature of this holiday becomes even more obvious. Consider the mischievous, winged, child-like archer known as Cupid. Today Cupid and his arrows are one of the most popular signs of love and Valentine's Day, but just where did this character come from?

According to Roman mythology, Cupid is the son of Venus a goddess of love and beauty. He was known as Eros in ancient Greece and said to be a god of sexual desire. It is from his name that we get the expression "erotic." Eros was a child of the gods Hermes and Aphrodite. As a product of this union, he was considered to be a "Herm-Aphrodite." This term became known as an individual that had both male and female genitals which may be

why Eros was frequently associated with bisexual and homosexual tendencies.

Most depictions of Cupid portray him as *amoretti*, a winged baby, but ancient talismans actually portrayed him as a winged phallus constructed of bronze, ivory, or wood. The name Cupid comes from the Latin verb "cupere" meaning "to desire." He has been described in ancient mythology as an extremely handsome, famous archer, who frequently hunted in the country and mountains. Thus, another representation of Nimrod emerges.

Cupid was also said to be responsible for impregnating numerous goddesses and mortals. In India Cupid was known as Kama. The ancient Indian sex manual borrowed this term calling itself the Kama Sutra.

Cupid's mythological relationship with his mother is also similar to that of Nimrod and his mother. Several paintings from the Renaissance era depict an incestuous relationship. In Bronzino's famous painting of 1545, Cupid kisses his mother while fondling her breast as she caresses his arrow. Michelangelo also produced a work of art portraying an abnormally intimate relationship between Cupid and Venus.

The origin of this quaint and innocent looking winged child is nothing short of evil and is something we should be alarmed about. No one should use this sort of imagery to portray love of any kind. Fraternizing with the names, symbols, or practices of false gods does not mix with the life of a Christian. No matter how cloaked these pagan symbols may seem, God perceives them as dining at the table of demons (1Cor. 10:21).

Symbols of Love - The Heart

The most common symbol of Valentine's Day is a shape known as the heart. Although this shape bears no resemblance to an

actual human heart, everyone considers it to be an expression of love, passion, or desire.

Today this symbol is used on a vast array of commercial and personal products including cards, balloons, chocolates, confectionaries, cakes, plates, napkins, eating utensils, towels, jewelry, key chains, toys, furniture, bed spreads, breakfast cereal, wrapping paper, and gift boxes to name a few. This image appears on shirts, blouses, and dresses. It is embroidered on jackets and pants. It is portrayed on underwear and lingerie, used in cartoons, advertisements, books, and company logos worldwide. It seems that there is no end to the products and places where we can find this shape known as the heart. But where did this shape originate and how did it come to be known as a symbol of love, passion, and even sexual desire?

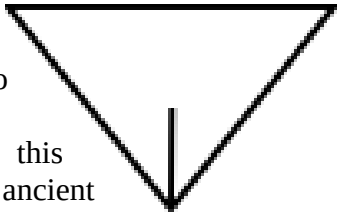
Some suggest that this shape resembles features of woman such as breasts or buttocks. While these suggestions might seem risqué, when it comes to the truth regarding Valentine's Day, they certainly have much more in common with this shape than a human heart.

The Catholic Church asserts that the symbol for the heart began in the 1673 when Margaret Mary had a series of visions of the shape inside of a crown. Her dreams inspired the creation of a Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. However, archaeological artifacts document this shape back to ancient times. Consider the words of Jack Tressider who wrote an extensive *Dictionary of Symbols*:

> The "Sacred Heart" of Christ became a focus of Roman Catholic worship as a symbol of the Lord's redeeming love... The heart transfixed by Eros' (Cupid's) arrow was another Renaissance theme, which became the motif of St. Valentine's Day—a mid-February festival with pagan rather than Christian roots (p. 101).

Just as Valentine's Day came from something other than Christianity, ancient artifacts date this symbol to times of antiquity. One opinion is that the modern heart shape came from Sumerian cuneiform which is a primitive text widely used in Asia during the

3rd millennium B.C. The symbol known as *sal* was used to represent a woman. Scholars believe that this cuneiform directly depicts the female pubic mound. Notice its resemblance to the modern shape of a heart.

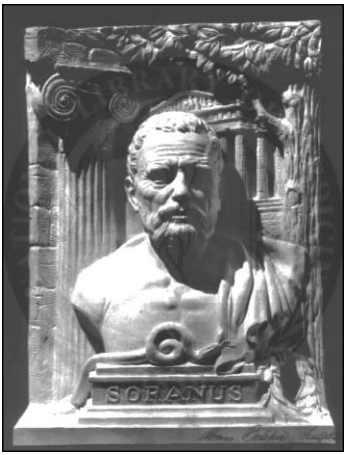


A more likely explanation for this symbol was found within the history of an ancient city found in modern day Libya known as Cyrene. Cyrenaica was a Greek colony founded by Aristoteles (Battus) of Thera in 630 B.C. The small upland areas surrounding this city was the only place in the world that produced a species of giant fennel called *silphion* by the Greeks and *silphium* by the Romans.

Silphium grew in a relatively narrow band along the Mediterranean bordered by the desert. Once discovered, it became one of the most valued and expensive pharmaceuticals of the ancient world. Silphium was Cyrene's chief local export through much of its early history, and the commercial trade of this plant made Cyrene one of the richest cities in Africa. One of the distinct characteristics of this plant was its fruit, called *phyllon* that grew in the same shape of today's symbol for the heart.

Silphium was highly valued as a culinary and medicinal plant. It used to treat the common cold, upset stomach, and many other ailments. However, its chief use was as a powerful contraceptive! The explanation for its high value is best understood as a means to prevent pregnancy. Even though the ancients were aware of related plants such as pennyroyal, some of the teas and potions made from silphium were said to be the most effective forms of birth-control at the time.

Crude Cyrenaican coins depicting silphium and its fruit ca 510-490 B.C.



Soranus, antiquity's foremost gynecologist, wrote, "To some people it seems advisable once during the month to drink Cyrenaic balm (silphium) to the amount of a chick-pea in two cyaths of water for the purpose of inducing menstruation... these things not only prevent conception, but also destroy any already existing" (*Soranus of Ephesus*, Gynecology, 63). Soranus believed *silphium* to have both preventative and abortive properties. Pliny the Elder also wrote, "The leaves of silphium are used in medicine to purge the uterus and to bring away the dead unborn

baby," and that the extract from seeds called *laser* were "used as a pessary (vaginal suppository) to promote menstruation" (*Pliny Natural History*, XLVIII, XLIX). Could this use of silphium be the motivation to use its fruit and seed pod to represent a symbol of love?

There are several references to this once rare and now extinct fennel in historic poetry. One narrative written by Catullus over 2000 years ago provides some interesting insight. While describing his adulterous relationship, Catullus' lover asks how many kisses it will take to satisfy him:

> You ask, my Lesbia, how many of your kisses are enough and more than enough for me? As big a number as the Libyan grains of sand that lie at silphium producing Cyrene between the oracle of Sultry Jupiter and the sacred tome of old Battus (Carmen 7; Gaius Valerius Catullus).

In other words, Catullus' desire for Lesbia would never wane, and he believed their adulterous relationship would go undetected as long as they had *silphium*! The contraceptive qualities of its sap would allow for them to have intercourse again and again without the chance of becoming pregnant. Thus, no tangible evidence of their affair would ever result.

Despite the many references to silphium's use as a method of birth control, some speculate if it truly was effective in this way. The speculation prompted a 1963 study which found that asefitida, a relative of silphium, was an effective contraceptive for humans. Other laboratory experiments found that various species of ferula, similar to varieties of giant fennel, inhibited implantation of fertilized ova when ingested by laboratory animals. Regardless of what can be known by modern science, we will never be sure about silphium's contraceptive properties. The value of this plant became so great that the people of Cyrene harvested it to extinction by the 1st century A.D. There is not so much as a leaf to be found today.

The final transformation securing the widespread popularity of the heart shape took place during the 5th century A.D. when monastic illustrators, inspired by the art of antiquity, portrayed trees of life with heart shaped leaves on them. In the 12th and 13th centuries heart shaped ivy leaves appeared in love scenes and shortly

after that they began to color them red, the color of blood, signifying good luck, health, and passion.

Nearly everyone uses this symbol not knowing its origion. *Silphium* is the likely candidate. As a contraceptive to avoid the consequences of careless sex, and a fruit that some believed portrayed aspects of the female body, it may have become a symbol for lust. This sort of unrestricted sexual behavior is the type of activity observed in pagan festivals that gave rise to our modern Valentine's Day.

Even after reading this information, some may continue to believe that there is no harm in observing Valentine's Day or playfully using the symbol portraying a human heart. Many strongly feel that the heart shape has become an acceptable sign of affection and love. With this in mind, consider what God says about attempts to redefine evil:

> Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20).

The Greek goddess Aphrodite was considered by her worshippers to be beautiful all over, but many believed that her buttocks were particularly stunning. Her cheeks were so appreciated that the Greeks built a temple to her and called it Venus Aphrodite Kallipygos, which meant "Venus of the beautiful buttocks." The month of April is named after this idol and the first day of this month is widely known as April fool's day—a time when people playfully lie to their friends in an attempt to make them the butt of jokes.

Imbolc and Groundhog's Day

Interestingly, the neo-pagans of today still celebrate an ancient festival in the month of February known as Imbolc in the west or Oimelc in the east. Imbolc is a festival of light reflecting the lengthening of the day and the hope of spring. It is one of the eight solar holidays, festivals, or sabbats of the neo-pagan wheel of the year and is celebrated on either the 1st or 2nd of February, the 2nd

being more popular in America. Notice the similarities between Imbolc, the Lupercalia, and Candlemas.

The holiday of Imbolc is a festival of light and many candles or lamps are used during its rituals. The deities of Imbolc are virgin/maiden goddesses such as Brighid, Aradia, Athena, Inanna, Gaia, and **Februa.** They also include the gods of love and fertility such as, Aengus Og, **Eros**, and **Februus.** Those deities marked in bold are also associated with the Lupercalia and Valentine's Day. In addition, the Catholic festival of Candlemas is also festivals of light using a great number of candles. The symbolism of Imbolc is: **Purity**, growth, and renewal, the reunion of the goddess and the god, **fertility** and dispensing of the old and making way for the new. These symbols are also indicative of both Candlemas and the Lupercalia. It would be hard to imagine that these neo-pagan festivals have nothing in common with the festivals of old. Ralph Whitlock in his book *A Calendar of Country Customs* stated:

> In Britain, Candlemas was held to mark a milestone in the return of the sun. The length of the days are increasing; Katharine Briggs says that candles were lighted to strengthen the power of the sun (p. 29).

This statement shows the similarity in modern pagan practice and professing Christian custom. Surprisingly, this also leads to another branch of the pagan tree celebrated mostly in America known as Groundhog's Day. Written in 1937, George William Douglas explained the theory and origin of Groundhog's Day stating:

> In the early part of this present century a group of merry wags living in and around Quarryville, Lancaster, Pa., organized the Slumbering Groundhog Lodge. On the morning of February 2 its members don silk hats and carry canes and go into the fields seeking the burrow of a woodchuck. When one finds a burrow he calls to the others and they all assemble to await the awakening of the animal from his hibernation and his emergence into the outer air. They watch his behavior and then return to the

> village where they interpret his actions and report them to the public (*The American Book of Days*, p. 78-79).

Our modern celebration is centered on a time when the groundhog comes out of his hole after a long winter sleep. If the rodent sees its shadow it supposedly regards it as an omen of six more weeks of bad weather and returns to its hole. If the day is filled with clouds and shadow-less, he supposedly takes that as a sign that spring is near and he stays above ground.

It is ridiculous for people to use this kind of superstition to forecast future events and plan their lives. Compare this supposed foretelling of future events to an age-old European poem whose author is unknown.

> If Candlemas Day be dry and fair, half the winter's to come, and mair; if Candlemas Day be wet and foul, the half of winters gone to Yule; If Candlemas Day be fair and bright, Winter will have another flight; if Candlemas Day be shower and rain, Winter is gone and will not come again.

The groundhog tradition stems from similar beliefs found in both the pagan Imbolc and the Catholic Candlemas observances. Candlemas is clearly rooted in the Lupercalia and the Catholics refuse to admit it, but Imbolc makes no pretense that its origin is anything other than pagan. This transference of festivals has blinded and confused people leading them further away from the truth and deeper into customs, rituals, and celebrations that originate in the worship of false gods. God does not approve of such a practice. In fact He condemns it!

While the origin of all these observances is clearly wrong, some may think that there is no harm in observing our modern Valentine's Day. Some may even believe that its original meaning has no influence on us as a modern society, and now it is a sweet and wholesome symbol of affection.

In like manner the Roman Catholic Church may have thought they too were doing a good deed for the people by adopting pagan practices and giving them a more Christian look and feel. They

certainly believed it was a political necessity in order to deal with the increasing numbers of heathen entering the church. They may have felt it was wise to transfer and transform these pagan festivals into "Christian" appearing celebrations, but the Eternal says:

> Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:21).

What Should You Do?

When Christ walked this earth He prophesied of many future events. One such prophecy explains how false teachers would claim that they represent Christ, but they would lead people astray. Our Savior stated:

> Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many (Matthew 24:4-5).

Christ was not speaking of people who would come claiming that they were the Messiah. He was telling His followers to beware because MANY would come and profess that Jesus was the Messiah, but they would use their claim as a means to deceive others. The deception would convince many that they were teaching the true ways of the Savior, but they would mix evil with good and by so doing would preach a false gospel about Christ, but not the true meaning of the gospel that Jesus preached.

This is precisely what has occurred. False teachers have brought damnable heresies like the celebration of Saint Valentine's Day into Christianity. They have convinced billions that Sunday supersedes God's Sabbath, and they have replaced God's commandments with traditions of men! The Apostle Peter spoke of such heresy during his time, stating:

> But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of

> whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of* eight *people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly (2 Peter 2:1-6).

Events have occurred exactly as prophesied and those who promote and observe such heresies are in danger of God's judgment! The tragedies during the time of Noah, and in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, are examples to us of what is coming, and how we must come out of the heresies of this world and not partake of her sins (Rev. 18:4). We have a choice to make. Follow the ways of God and His Word or follow the ways of the heathen. And the Lord cries out to us saying "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2).

Is it really all that Bad?

Many would say that, even though this celebration came from sinister sources, it means something different today. After all, it is about love and affection. Isn't that a good thing? How could it be wrong to observe something that was once evil, but now appears to be good? The Apostle Paul addressed such a question when false ministers were coming into the Church at Corinth and leading people astray. He wrote:

> For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light**. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

If you were to meet Satan or one of his demons on the street, they would not appear as hideous monsters with horns, scales, claws, and fang-like teeth. They would probably be attractive, polite, and friendly—someone you might consider being friends with. Most people have no idea how great a deceiver Satan can be. The Scriptures state that he has actually deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9). It should be of no surprise that the celebrations he promotes appear to us as beautiful, fun, and good.

We must not be fooled by the pageantry. We must use truth and biblically proven ethics to put up a defense against the wiles of the devil (Eph, 6:11; 1Ths. 5:21). We cannot be divided in our obedience and our loyalty. If we claim to believe in Jesus Christ then it is our duty to strive for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). We cannot serve other gods no matter how long ago they were worshipped. We must make a choice between that which is good and that which merely appears to be good. The prophet Elijah made this point clear stating:

> How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him (1 Kings 18:21).

We cannot mix the ways of God and the ways of the devil. When we are presented with the truth, we have to make a decision and choose between the two. Indecision leads to a half-hearted and lukewarm faith; something the Lord detests (Rev. 3:16). The Apostle Paul also made this point clearly stating:

> The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons (1 Corinthians 10:20-21).

The way of God does not mix with the ways of devils. We are not to partake of anything related to them and if we do—it will greatly affect our relationship with the Eternal. There is nothing holy

or pure about holidays that are derived from pagan festivals. Idolatrous activities cannot be turned into something that is good. There is no place for them in the life of an individual who claims to be Christian.

During the Apostle Paul's ministry, some of the brethren in the Church at Corinth were influenced by the heathen atmosphere in which they lived. Paul exhorted them to not allow the practices of unbelievers to become entangled in their ways. Paul stated:

> Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

The choice is clear. If we desire to follow God then we must choose to live by His every word (Deu. 8:3; Mat. 4:4). Only then will He accept us and be a Father unto us. We cannot mix the ways of good with evil. Now is our chance to show God how we really feel about Him and choose His way, the way that will lead us to blessings and life (Deu. 30:19).

The Truth be Known

The truth about Valentine's Day has been unmasked and it is clear that our modern day observance is a lie! It is a celebration dressed up in chocolate candy, decorative cards, and love gone astray. It may seem that the basis for our modern Valentine's Day is of good intention, but as innocent as this holiday may seem, its traditions originate from extremely perverted customs and ideals. Our celebration of this day is an abomination to God! It is continuing

the ancient worship of false gods and by keeping it we break the first and great commandment.

When Israel left the pagan nation of Egypt and traveled to the promised-land in Canaan, God warned them about those heathen nations they would encounter and instructed them not to do as they do. The great God instructs us also to not follow their ways stating:

> According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I *am* the LORD your God (Leviticus 18:3-4).

God has given us a perfect set of rules and instructions, ones that are based on true love and wholesome values. In so doing He has shown us the right way to love, the right way to live and how to give good gifts expressing that love. Instead, mankind has chosen a cheap imitation based upon lust not love. In fact, it is not only the lust of the flesh, but a desire for that which is ungodly. In accepting the practice of pagans as valid days to keep, man is whoring after other gods that not only are inferior to the true God, in reality they are not gods at all! The Almighty warns against mixing heathen practice with our worship of Him when He says:

> Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them... and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods (Deuteronomy 12:30-31).

God hates false gods and our man-made festivals that honor them. He also does not approve of changing their practice to symbolize something that appears holy. Attempting to Christianize heathen celebrations to be more acceptable in the eyes of men does

not make them acceptable to God. Those abominations will always lead people further away from the truth.

God is not the author of confusion (1Cor. 14:33) and he does not desire us to accept some inferior concept of love, for God is love (1John 4:8).

True Love

Today millions of people celebrate Valentine's Day and yet they have no idea what true love is. Nearly half of marriages end in divorce while adultery and fornication flourishes. A fifth of all adolescents have sex before the age of 15. Biblical family values are widely disregarded while people adopt a "new age" way of thinking that really comes from pagan ways of old. According to the entertainment industry love is equivalent to lust, but sexual relations are a wonderful gift reserved for wedlock. True love is something that cannot be gained by copulation, a valentine card, or a box of chocolates once a year. Inspired by the Almighty, Paul expresses the terms of love stating:

> Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, RSV).

These are beautiful words revealing the true expressions and meaning of love. The attributes of love are admirable and should be sought after. Love is something that must be worked at and these qualities will often come natural to those who experience it. Love is a wonderful thing that makes life worth living. It cannot be purchased in a box of chocolates or expressed by saying "will you be my valentine?" once a year. Love is something that is shown by the way we live and how we treat each other every day, all year round, not just on February 14th. Even though many sincere couples may celebrate it, the whole concept of Valentine's Day cheapens the true meaning of love. It brings the God plane relationship of sex between two loving married partners down to the gutter level of

plain lust and self-fulfillment. If you truly love someone, then you owe it to them to not celebrate a day that mocks the true values of love and God.

Conclusion

Valentine's Day has an ancient past rooted deep in paganism, mythology, heathen ritual, and fairy tale. It is an idolatrous celebration that condones depravity and offers a cheap imitation of true love. Not only does God disapprove of this practice—He condemns it! We must use the Word of God to separate the evil from the good and only practice that which is right. Our Lord cries out to us stating:

> Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins,
> and lest you receive of her plagues (Revelation 18:4).

No true Christian should partake of Valentine's Day. We must not only forsake the worship of false gods, but their holidays passed down for generations. If we desire to follow Christ then we must stop our observance of this day and come out of the apostate system that condones these practices. We must worship God in spirit and truth; not myth and fairy tale. The answer is clear—the choice is yours.

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, audio, and video to help people better understand the Bible. Some of the printed material available includes:

The Truth about Easter

The Truth about Heaven

The Day of Christ's Resurrection

The Truth about Halloween

The Truth about Christmas

Are the Ten Commandments Required Today?

The Truth about Tithing

Sabbath Confessions

The Truth about New Year's Day

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