

The 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 designated as a holiday for those in love—Valentine's Day has nothing in common with the love of God. Like so many of our traditional holidays its origin is far from holy and its celebration today is filled with materialism.

The Greeting Card Association estimates that approximately one billion valentine cards are sent at this time each year. The U.S. National Census calculates that Americans gobble down nearly 7 billion pounds of candy annually and it is believed a large portion of this is consumed during Valentine's Day. So large is this confectionary consumption that it has a national value of nearly 16 billion dollars.

The buck does not stop with cards and candy. For example, in February of 2004, jewelry stores sold 2.4 billion dollars worth of precious stones and metal. According to the Floral Index—a research firm that studies the floral industry—110 million roses were sold on Valentine's Day in 2004. The Society for American Florists states that, "Valentine's Day ranks first in sales of cut flowers and yields the highest revenues for florists.

A virtual love-frenzy seems to take place during this time of year, but why? How did this holiday come into existence? When was it instituted and by whom? Why does it fall on February 14th and how did it come to be known as Saint Valentine's Day? The origin and meaning of this celebration need not be a mystery. Now you can know the shocking truth about Valentine's Day!

The Original Valentine

In deeply examining 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 the Babylonian mystery religion. The Bible speaks of Nimrod as "a mighty one" and "a mighty hunter." As Moses writes:

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. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel... (Gen 10:8-10).

The name Valentine comes from the Latin word "valens" meaning strong, powerful or mighty. Nimrod was such a mighty one and therefore became the subject of innumerable legends. Along with his mother Semiramis, he was worshipped as a god for thousands of years after his death and traces of his worship are still found in many religious practices today.

God punished the people who followed Nimrod as they were building the tower known as Babel. The project was then abandoned after the people began speaking different languages and were scattered throughout the earth (Gen. 11:8). However, where ever they went they took Nimrod's mystery religion with them. In their new locations they erected false gods and observed unholy rituals based upon what they had learned from Nimrod in Babylon. As a result of the wide dispersion, and the fact that the people now spoke different languages, Nimrod came to be called by many different names. He was known as Asar, Dumuzi, Orian, Pan, Gilgamesh, Osiris, Eros, Cupid, Baal and Marduk to name just a few. Speaking of Nimrod's infamous influence, Ray C. Stedman states the following in his article titled *God's Funnel*:

The account zooms in on an individual named Nimrod, who is called a great 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." (Nimrod) 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 (p. 3-4).

Nimrod was said to be the spiritual heart of Babylon. In the Babylonian tongue the word for heart is "bal." Baal, who is mentioned often in the Bible, is really just another title for the founder of apostate religion—Nimrod. According to *Lempriere's Classical Dictionary*, the Semites understood that Baal was also known as Pan who was associated with the Phoenician sun-god of the same name.

Another link in Nimrod's transformation to Baal is found in the god Marduk. Dropping the first consonant of Nimrod's name and lining up the remaining letters, you end up with "MRD" which is literally the root word for the Babylonian god Marduk. The *Encyclopedia Britannica World Religions* CD-ROM documents the link between Marduk and Baal, and the proliferation of different names for the gods springing from this one person. They write:

Marduk was... 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. The poem Enuma elish, dating from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1124–

03 BCE), refers to Marduk as the god of 50 names, each one that of a deity or of a divine attribute.

The Pagan god Baal is well documented in the Bible. The Israelites were seduced into the worship of both Baal and Ashtaroth, 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, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. 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 her god husband—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 virgin birth of Jesus by Mary that would take place centuries later.

The incestuous relationship of Semiramis with Nimrod, and the lie of an immaculate conception, eventually spread throughout much of the world to become the modern day worship of Madonna and child, a foundational teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Lupercalia

As the people were scattered abroad from Babel, the legends of Nimrod went with them becoming a catalyst for the creation of new gods. These gods were actually the old gods of Babylon, but they were given new names according to the language now spoken by the relocated people. 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 were all associated with a Roman festival that ultimately evolved into our modern Valentine's Day. This ancient festival was called the Lupercalia and was originally celebrated on February 15th with various festivities also occurring on the 14th.

Lupercus was the god of shepherds and was called upon to protect their sheep. He was known as a mighty mountain wolf hunter, a title very similar to the description of Nimrod found in the book of Genesis. Coincidentally, there is also evidence that Nimrod himself traveled to modern day Italy 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 honored the legendary founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. Falling on February 15th, this festival was conducted in the spring and regarded as a festival of purification and fertility as well as a spiritual means to protect the flocks by warding off dangerous wolves. 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 the Luperci, meaning brothers of the wolf, who were priests of Faunus. The festivities 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, sacrificed a dog and one or two goats at the site. 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 the wolves. The blood from the victims was then 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 would then gird themselves with loincloths made from the goat's skin.

The goatskin hide was also used to fashion whips called "februa." The young men were then to 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.

This 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.



Ancient relief of a half naked young man holding a februa

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.

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 ancient god associated with Nimrod and the Lupercalia was Pan. Described as a strong man, Pan resembled a human with goat legs and two horns. He has been portrayed in ancient art as running through the mountains slaying wild animals and sometimes copulating with goats and seducing young men and women. Because of his Nimrod like strength and vitality, he too was portrayed as a mighty hunter. It was believed that the powerful Pan literally had the ability to bring great fear upon those in his presence. It was from this ancient fable that we have derived our modern word "panic."



Sculpture of Pan and Daphnis; ca. 100 B.C. found in Pompeii

The association of the Lupercalia and Pan is noted by H. J. Rose in his book *Religion in Greece and Rome*. In this work he compares one of the symbolic perverted acts of the Lupercalia to the god 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 name to add to the list of those honored during the Lupercalia was Faunus and the description given him provides much insight into the supposed purification involved in the Lupercalia. *The Encyclopedia Britannica: World Religions* describes 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.

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 "...generally represented as a lustful figure having the horns, legs and the ears of a goat" (*Encyclopedia Britannica: World Religions, Pan*).

Another Pagan god of old was Februus, 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 word meaning fever. This of course refers to the fever of love or hot passion. The widely used expression of being lovesick quite possibly came from this term febris.

Because of the man 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 begin to see that the title of our month "February" gives insight into the practices of ancient Rome. February was nominally the last month of the Roman calendar, as the year originally began in March. As winter began to pass and the days become longer, the festivals of purity, fertility, springtime love and supposed spiritual enlightenment began. According to Dictionary.com, the word February comes from the Latin Februarius and literally means: "month of purification," from februa "purifications" The last month of the ancient (pre-450 B.C.E.) Roman calendar, so named in reference to the Roman feast of purification, held on the ides of the month (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/february>).

John Robertson, an expert on the ancient Roman and modern western calendars, states that:

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 obvious 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 explains this in his book *Seasonal Feasts and Festivals*, saying:

...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 on February 15th? This was also related to Nimrod who was purported to have been born during the 21st century BC on the winter solstice, celebrated on January 6th in ancient times. In those days, custom required a new mother to attend a purification ritual in the temple forty days after the child's birth. With January 6th considered as the birth of both the new sun and their notorious god, the purification ritual for Semiramis would have fallen on our calendar date of February 15th or on February 14th when counting the day beginning at sunset—as was the custom of the day.

Putting all these facts together, a trail through time begins to emerge. The early fertility festivals transitioned into our modern expressions as civilization moved forward. Thus, the roots of Valentine's Day are found deeply embedded in the ancient pagan purification and fertility festivals. By following the foot prints of this so called "love" holiday even further back in time, they lead to Nimrod and his perverted sexual relationship with his mother/wife Semiramis.

The Lupercalia, Lover's Lottery and Valentine Cards

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—February 14th on the Roman calendar—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 during the culmination of the Lupercalia ceremony.

During this particular ceremony, names of teenage 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 would remain partners for the rest of the year and this sometimes resulted in marriage. James Hastings writes of this celebration in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics vol 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 became 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 for a year. 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 see the name of the girl the male was to care for on his sleeve.

In France, both sexes drew from the valentine box. A book titled *Travels in England*, written in 1698, gives an account of the way this was done:

On St. Valentine's Eve 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 hers. . . 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.

During this period there was a minor poem written by John Lydgate stating, "A balade made... in wyse of chesing loues at Saint Valentynes day." This poem further indicates that the manner of choosing a valentine mate was done by a drawing of names.

In an effort to downplay the lustful practice of the "lover's lottery" the Catholic church tried to change this heathen practice into something more acceptable. By substituting the names of girls with the names of saints the young people would draw a name out of an urn or box. For the following year they would study and attempt to emulate the saint whose name they had drawn. By the fourteenth century this practice had died out and the people reverted back to the use of girl's names. In the sixteenth century the church once again tried to make Valentine's Day saintly, but it was just as unsuccessful as their first attempt to "Christianize" this pagan practice. Alban Butler writes 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 forbid 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.

Down through time this heathen practice has continued to evolve. The next step in its evolution was a variation of the name drawing practice and during the 17th century celebrants began to exchange love notes known today 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 produced and sold by Esther A. Howland in 1847.

The giving of a card to another person stating “Will you be my valentine?” is no less than an extension of the lover’s lottery—an ancient practice in honor of the goddess Juno, resulting in unbridled sexual licentiousness.

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.

As a result, a modern expression of the lover’s lottery takes place in thousands of elementary schools across America each year. Not desiring anyone to be left out by not receiving a valentine card, many teachers will put all the names of their students in a box and draw out names of those who are to give one another a valentine that year.

Christianizing a Pagan Festival

Like many secular holidays observed by this world 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 an idolatrous custom. This process began during the fourth century when Emperor Constantine made Christianity an official religion in the Roman Empire.

By this act, vast numbers of pagans began to stream into the church. The clergy made attempts to convert the pagans from their cherished licentious worship, but the deep seated passions of the vast numbers of people now seeking inclusion in the church made this impossible. In an attempt to bridge this gap, the church decided to give the pagan festivals a makeover. In his book *Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, John Brand states this well known fact.

Thus at the first promulgation of Christianity to the gentile nations . . . they (gentiles) 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 (p. 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 states:

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 only one of many sources confirming that in the year 496 AD, Pope Gelasius attempted to do away with the Lupercalia and the lover’s lottery because of their Pagan and immoral practices. During this time a supposed saint named Valentine was chosen as the patron saint of lovers. Soon afterwards the church instituted a lottery of saints to be observed and they also created a new feast—the Purification of the Virgin Mary.

Candlemas – the Purification of the Virgin Mary

In an attempt to change the Pagan symbolism of fertility and purification during the month of February, the Roman Catholic church adopted another festival called the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary. Regarding this festival, *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>).

In the statement above, the Catholic church admits to observing this day of “purification.” In an attempt to justify themselves they state that, in their opinion, this 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 hide is that this feast was observed, but by Pagans for centuries before the birth of Christ. They were striving to conceal this fact because their celebrations were not “proper” and they actually had a name—the Lupercalia! The church simply wanted to deny any connection with this 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.

Despite denial by the Catholic Church there are many documents showing a connection between their introduced holiday observances and the February Pagan festivities. In the late 1700s, John Brand wrote the following:

Then there was a Pope that was called Sergius, and when he saw Christian people drawn to this false maumetry and untrue belief, he thought to undo this foule use and custom, and turn it into 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. (p. 44, Brand, John and Sir Henry Ellis. *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of Our Vulgar and Provincial Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions* Vol. 1 London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848).

The *Encyclopedia Britannica: World Religions* states the following in an article regarding Candlemas. Note the time of its earliest known observance as they write:

The earliest reference to the festival is from the late 4th century. By the middle of the 5th century the custom of observing the festival with lighted candles had been introduced, whence the name Candlemas.

Candlemas was certainly was not a practice of the early New Testament Church. Historians agree that the first references to it date back to the same time Pope Gelasius instituted Saint Valentine's Day. It is obvious that this celebration was yet another attempt to whitewash Pagan observances. The online encyclopedia *Wikipedia* states that:

Gelasius finally suppressed the ancient Roman festival of the Lupercalia, after a long contest. Gelasius' letter to Andromachus, the senator, covers the main lines of the controversy and incidentally offers some details of this festival combining fertility and purification that might have been lost otherwise. Significantly, the February Lupercalia was replaced with a festival celebrating the purification and fertility of the Virgin Mary instead.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gelasius_I).

This confirms that not only did pope Gelasius replace the Lupercalia with the celebration of purification and fertility of Mary, now known as Candlemas, but that his letter to a state official describing the controversy helped to preserve the details of the Lupercalia that might have otherwise been lost! In addition, there is a documented sermon given by Pope Innocent XII (1691-1700) in which he says:

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 (The American Book of Days, p. 77-78).

It is clear that these Pagan festivals were reframed as professing Christian observances. Candlemas is celebrated on February 15th, the same date as the Lupercalia in the eastern churches but was later moved to February 2nd in the western churches to coincide with the claim that Jesus was born on December 25th the date they now associate with another "Christianized" pagan holiday known as Christmas. It is also evident that Saint Valentine's Day was introduced in an attempt to give the feast of Juno Februa and the lover's lottery a face lift, thus Christianizing another licentious festival, but why did the church pick Valentine? Who is this supposed saint?

Saint Valentine

After several years of the new celebrations, a mysterious man named Valentine became the patron saint for the church observance that was to replace the pagan Lupercalia. How did he become associated with the ancient rites of Juno, Pan, Lupercus and Faunus?

Today, the Catholic church recognizes at least three different saints known as Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom are mentioned in the 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, along with other companions, suffered persecution while in Africa. Of this third Valentine nothing else is known. Additionally, facts behind the events and martyrdom of all three Valentines are murky. They might better be described as myth for when they are studied it appears that conflicting and different stories have been collected concerning saint Valentine.

For example; Valentine is said to have served as a priest during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius II. It is said that at this time 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, to strengthen his military, Claudius made a decree outlawing marriage. 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 believed that Valentine fell in love with the jailor's daughter who visited him during his confinement. Before his death he wrote her a letter which he signed, "From your Valentine," an expression that is widely used today.

The stories behind the Saint Valentine legends are vague and many secular historians believe that they were simply fabrications enabling the church to retain the appeal of the Pagan February feasts by changing their licentious meanings to a more acceptable image of love, purity and holiness. The stories certainly were sympathetic to the church, picturing a heroic, romantic figure and it is no surprise that by the middle ages Saint Valentine was one of the most popular figures in England and France.

Today some scholars question if a saint named Valentine ever actually existed. However, if he did exist, they agree that there is no evidence that his life warranted the creation of a lover's holiday. Paradoxically, the heroic stories of this saint Valentine have nothing to do with the festivities of our modern holiday. The *Encyclopedia Britannica 1970 Edition* states that:

St. Valentine's Day as a lovers' festival, the choice of a valentine, and the modern development of sending valentine cards has no relation to the saint or to any incident in his life.

We can now understand the association of Valentine's Day with what was observed by heathens throughout history. We can see just how it became what it is today and yet there is more!

Serving the Creature Rather than the Creator

Because of the change in season during February, there lies a natural instinct of many birds to choose a mate this time of year and the anticipation of this process added fuel to the observance of these fertility and so-called love festivals. In Geoffrey Chaucer's *Parliament of Foules* written in 1380 we read:

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 looked upon as a perfect occasion for carnal lovers to exchange love tokens and intimacies. 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*:

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 stomacher;
Celebrations
Thous 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:

Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature (creation) rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever (Romans 1:21-25).

God is the very source and embodiment of real love (1 John 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. Jesus Christ pinpoints the error of man's ways, stating:

In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine 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 states 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 Valentines Day - Cupid

When focusing on the various symbols of Valentines 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 was the son of Venus the goddess of love and beauty. He was known as Eros in ancient Greece, a god of love and sexual desire. It is from his name Eros that we get the word "erotic" meaning sexual love or lustful desire. Eros was said to be a child of the gods Hermes and Aphrodite. As a product of this union, he was considered to be "Herm-Aphrodite." This signified a sexual union which later was defined as a being endowed with the reproductive organs of both male and female. Eros was particularly associated with youth and homosexual desire and this portrayal of youth eventually transformed the image of Cupid to a young child or the baby he is portrayed as today.



Most representations of Cupid show him as an amoretto, a winged baby, but ancient talismans actually portrayed him as winged phalli constructed of bronze, ivory, or wood. In India Cupid was known as Kama. The famous sex manual *The Kama Sutra* was named after him.

The name Cupid comes from the Latin verb "cupere" meaning "to desire." He has been described in ancient folklore as an extremely handsome, famous archer, who frequently hunted in the country and mountains. He also is said to be responsible for impregnating numerous goddesses and mortals. Thus another manifestation emerges from these tall tales of Cupid.

Said to be a very handsome man, Nimrod became an object of desire eliciting lust in many women including his own mother, Semiramis, who eventually married him. Cupid—like the legends of Nimrod from which he was created—came equipped with the skills, characteristics and stories of being a mighty hunter.

Cupid's mythological relationship with his mother Venus is similar to that of Nimrod and his mother, Semiramis. Several paintings from the Renaissance era show a rather incestuous relationship between Cupid and Venus. 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 cute, peaceful and innocent looking winged child is nothing short of evil and is something we should be alarmed about. No one should admire or use this kind of imagery to portray love of any kind. Fraternizing with the names, imagery or practices of false gods and their ways do not mix with the life of a Christian. No matter how cloaked these Pagan ways may seem, God perceives as dining at the table of devils (1 Cor. 10:21).

Symbols of Love - The Heart

One of the most widely used and recognized symbols of love and Valentine's Day is a shape known as the heart. Although this shape bears no resemblance to an actual human heart it is considered a valid expression of one's inner feelings—a sign of love and 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 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 on album covers, music videos, advertisements, cartoons, 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?

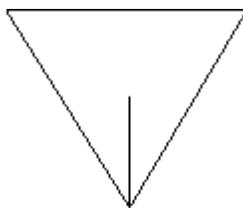
Some contend that this shape resembles features of the female, such as the breasts. Others believe that it is representative of a woman's buttocks when ready for copulation. While these suggestions might seem a bit risqué, when it comes to Valentine's Day, they certainly have much more in common with this shape than an actual human heart.

The Greek goddess of beauty Aphrodite was considered beautiful all over but many of her worshippers believed that her buttocks were especially beautiful.



Her shapely cheeks were so appreciated that the Greeks built a temple to Aphrodite Kallipygos, which literally meant “goddess with beautiful buttocks.” The month of April is named after this goddess and the first day of this month is widely known as April fool's day, a time when people become the butt of jokes.

Another interesting opinion is that this symbol is a representation of the female pubic mound. The Sumerian cuneiform is a character text that was widely used in Asia during the 3rd millennium B.C. and the symbol for “woman” in this text, known as “sal,” closely resembles the heart shape (picture below). Scholars believe that this cuneiform directly depicts the female pubic mound.



Sumerian symbol for woman

Another more intriguing and the likely explanation for our modern symbol of the heart lies within the ruins of an ancient city in Libya called 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 valuable species of giant fennel called silphion by the Greeks and silphium by the Romans. Cyrene's chief local export through much of its early history was this herb and the commercial trade of this plant made Cyrene one of the richest cities in Africa until the founding of Alexandria.

One of the distinct characteristics of this plant was its seed pods which grew in the same shape of today's symbol for the heart. This treasured plant was so highly regarded that its seed pod became a trademark of the city/state. This is documented by discoveries of ancient coins from Cyrenaica which depict an image of the silphium seed pod.



Crude Cyrenaican coins bearing the silphium seed pod; ca 510-470 B.C.

This plant was considered unique and of great value. Chiefly it was used as medicine, food and as an aphrodisiac. It also had aromatic fruits and succulent edible shoots. It was used in treatment of leprosy, to restore hair and as an antidote for poison. It was said to convey longevity and give strength and courage, but its most notable use was as a powerful **contraceptive**. Some of the teas and potions made from silphium were supposedly the most effective forms of birth-control at the time. Herein lies the motivation for transference of the silphium seed pod to the symbol of love.

The Roman physician Soranus, antiquity's foremost gynecologist, wrote that women should drink the juice from an amount of silphium about the size of a chick pea, with water, once a month since "it not only prevents conception but also destroys anything existing."



A more detailed 2500 year old Cyrenian coin shows on one side a stalk of silphium. On the other a woman sits, touching the plant with one hand—her other hand points to her genitals.

There are many references to this fennel in historic poetry down through the ages, but a poem written by Catullus over 2000 years ago provides some interesting insight. In his poem Catullus is having an adulterous relationship. He is responding to his married lover Lesbia after she 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, he will never be satisfied and they can continue their adulterous relationship as long as they have silphium! This powerful contraceptive allowed them to have intercourse again and again without the chance of becoming pregnant and therefore no one would be the wiser. There would be no evidence of their affair.

This heart shaped seed pod was in such demand that it likely became the symbol of love making. The Encyclopedia *Wikipedia* states:

There has been some speculation about the connection between silphium and the traditional heart shape. The Catholic Church claims that the symbol of the heart began in the 1600s when Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque had a vision of a heart shape inside a crown of thorns. However, the symbol is present in stained glass works from far earlier than that. The symbol is remarkably similar to the Egyptian "heart soul" (ab). The sexual nature of that concept, combined with the widespread use of silphium in ancient Egypt for birth control, and the fact that the seeds of silphium are shaped like a heart, leads to speculation that the character for ab may have been derived from the shape of the silphium seed (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silphium>).

According to historians, ancient Egyptians were frequent users of silphium for birth control and they also related these seed pods to a character known as "ab" and being of a "sexual nature." While some may speculate if silphium was truly an effective form of birth control, past literary

evidence points to a resounding yes. Modern studies also indicate that other fennels such as asafetida, an inferior variety of silphium, does indeed have contraceptive properties. However, we will likely never be 100% sure about the silphium seed pod as the Cyrenaicans harvested this plant to extinction by the 1st century A.D. and there is not so much as a leaf to be found today.

The final transformation and widespread popularity of the heart shape took place during the 5th century A.D. when monastic illustrators—inspired by the art of antiquity—portrayed the trees of life with heart shaped leaves on them. Ironically these trees of life bearing the image of silphium seed pods were, in reality, more like trees of death. 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 love.

Today both children and adults freely use the symbol of the heart not knowing where it came from or what it truly means. It is likely that silphium is the candidate for its origin. As a contraceptive and a pod that is seemingly stamped with an emblem portraying aspects of the female body, it would naturally become the symbol for unrestricted licentious and sexual practices observed in the pagan festivals that gave rise to our modern—Valentine’s Day.

While the origin of this symbol becomes clear, some may still believe that there is no harm in using or wearing it today. Surely its original meaning has no influence on us as a modern society, and it is now a cute and wholesome symbol of affection. With this in mind let us read what God says about such things:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20)

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 Brigid, 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* states:

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 explains 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 Lord says:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20-21)

What Should You Do?

When Jesus 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 states:

Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many (Matthew 24:4-5).

Jesus was not speaking of people who would come claiming that they were the predicted Messiah. He was telling His followers to be aware because “many” will come and profess that Jesus was the Christ. By doing so they would convince many that they were teaching the true ways of the Savior. This is precisely what has occurred. False teachers have brought damnable heresies like the celebration of Saint Valentine’s Day right into church! Those who teach and observe such things must repent and change their ways. The apostle Peter confirms this, stating:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly (2 Peter 2:1-6).

Events have occurred exactly as prophesied and those who promote and observe such things are in danger of God’s judgment! The tragedies during the time of Noah, and in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, are examples to us that we should not live ungodly. We have a choice to follow the ways of God and His Word or to follow the ways of men and 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 will say that even though this celebration is not a godly holiday, it doesn’t seem that bad. After all, it is about love and affection. Isn’t that a good thing? Can it truly be wrong to observe something that was once evil and yet now seems to be good? The apostle Paul addresses such a question as 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 the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

If you were to meet Satan or one of his demons on the street today, they would not appear as some hideous monster with horns, scales, claws and fang like teeth. Rather they would probably be clean cut, handsome, polite and friendly—someone you might consider having a cup of coffee 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 fall prey to the deceits of the devil. We must use God's Word to prove all things and put up a defense against his wiles (Eph, 6:11, 1 Thes. 5:21). We cannot be divided in our obedience and our loyalty. If we claim to follow the true God of the universe then it is our duty to strive for the faith once delivered (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 is evil. The prophet Elijah makes this point clear stating:

How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him (1 Kings 18:21).

We cannot follow 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 lukewarm mediocre faith, something the Lord detests (Rev. 3:16). The apostle Paul also makes this point clearly stating:

Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils (1 Corinthians 10:21).

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 practice cannot be whitewashed into something that is good. There is no place for them in the life of one who claims to be Christian.

During the apostle Paul's ministry, some of the brethren in the Church at Corinth were being 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 states:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith 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 (Deut. 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 (Deut. 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 Valentine's Day 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:

After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 18:3).

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 the mixing heathen practice with our worship of Him when He says:

Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto 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 (1 Cor. 14:33) and he does not desire us to accept some inferior concept of love, for God is love (1 Jn. 4:8).

True Love

Today millions of people celebrate Valentine's Day and yet they have no idea what true love is. Half of today's marriages end in divorce and adultery flourishes (US Census 2002). 1 in 5 adolescents have had sex before the age of 15 (Discovery Health Channel). Family values are being flushed down the toilet as we consume what the television and movies serve up to us. To Hollywood, love is sex and lust. But—Sex is a wonderful gift from God and is reserved for couples to experience in marriage. True love is something that cannot be gained by copulation alone. Inspired by the Almighty, Paul expresses the terms of true 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. The whole concept of our modern 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. The Eternal God does not approve 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 good. Our Lord cries out to us saying:

Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not 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 Jesus 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 ours.