



January 27, 2023

Would Christ Keep Valentine's Day?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Valentine's Day is right around the corner. On February 14 of every year, this global celebration of love and admiration is highly anticipated by people of all age groups. In Latin America, where my wife and I served, they refer to Valentine's Day as *El Dia Del Amor y Amistad* or "the day of love and friendship. In Colombia, a similar day is observed on the 3rd week of September. With the popularity of Social Media, Facebook etc. many have become confused as to whether it is okay to celebrate it or not. So I thought I would take some time to explain what often surrounds this day, and celebrated by many.

Might we ask the important question? Would Christ keep or observe Valentine's Day?

The world we live in continually throws temptations at us. Often this world's holidays can be masked as what appears "good", caring, and even loving. That being said, we need to be wise, prudent, and in tune with what God teaches us from His Word.

One of these customs of the world, which is a temptation at times to some in the Body of Christ or Church of God in this month of February, is Valentine's Day.

To answer this question, let's examine God's Word and follow Jesus' example. While many people view this day as the chosen day to give a card and gift to their "love", this celebration is steeped in a long documented history of false religion.

Let's firstly consider some of the camouflaged false gods of Valentine's Day:

- Cupid, the son of Venus, goes back in antiquity to Tammuz, son of Semiramis and Nimrod;
- Jupiter, the head deity and sun god, is anciently Nimrod, Semiramis' husband; and
- Venus, the daughter of Jupiter, is really Semiramis herself (who was both mother and wife of Nimrod), and she was known as the "queen of heaven."

Nigel Pennick, author of *The Pagan Book of Days*, describes February, (the month in which Valentine's Day falls): "The name of this month comes from the Roman goddess Februa and St. Febronia (from Febris, the fever of love). She is the patroness of the passion of love.... Her orgiastic rites are celebrated on 14 February—still observed as St. Valentine's Day— when, in Roman times, young men would draw billets naming their female partners.... This is a time of clear vision into other worlds, expressed by festivals of purification. On the 1st of February is the celebration of the crossquarter day, or fire festival (Imbolg), a purificatory festival. It is followed on the 2nd by its Christian counterpart, Candlemas, the purification of the Virgin Mary" (Nigel Pennick, *The Pagan Book of Days* p. 37). During Lupercalia, the names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by men as chance directed. Exchanging Valentines grew out of this name drawing".

The Lupecalia was therefore a licentious time of fornication, where young men would draw the name of a young lady from a box and the two were considered a pair (sexually and otherwise) for the coming year.

It has nothing to do with the genuine Holy Days of God, all listed in Leviticus 23. Any good encyclopedia or reference material will show where Valentine's Day originated. It never came from the Word of God, New or Old Testament.

The American Book of Days by Jan M. Hatch (3rd edition), reads, ". . . association [of Valentine's Day] with lovers is a survival, in Christianised form, of a practice that occurred on February 14, the day before the ancient Roman feast of the Lupercalia..." (p. 178).

Holidays and Anniversaries of the World by Laurence Vrdang and Christie N. Donohue, in the article "Valentine's Day," says, "[Valentine's Day is] also believed to be a continuation of the Roman festival of Lupercalia."

The New Standard Encyclopedia, under the article "Valentine," states: "Saint Valentine was an obscure, possibly legendary, martyr who by tradition was put to death by the Romans on February 14, about [AD] 269. This day was made a feast day by Pope Gelasius I of the Roman Catholic Church. The date of his death almost coincided with that of the Roman feast of the Lupercalia. . . .The celebration of the two occasions were merged."

Pope Gelasius I, who included Valentine admitted that he was among all those "... whose names are justly revered among men, but whose acts are known only to God." As Pope Gelasius I implies, nothing was then known about Valentine's life. So, all of the legends surrounding "Saint Valentine" are at best, fictional and without any substance.

Lupercalia (also known as Februatio, which is where we get the name for our month of February) was popular among many of the new converts to the quick-rising Catholic Church, and as Celebrations: *The Complete Book of American Holidays* notes: "Everywhere that [Roman Catholic] Christians came into power they immediately adapted the holidays and customs of the people to their own creed" (Robert J. Myers and the editors of Hallmark Cards, 1972, pp. 50-51).

Some will argue "this is no big deal, why it is all about love, and Jesus is love, right?"

Well, what we see is Valentine's Day is a continuation of the ancient pagan festival of Lupercalia. There is nothing mysterious or secret about this pagan observance, as most of these reference works also have information about Lupercalia.

The Encyclopaedia Americana, 1996, from the article "Lupercalia," says: "...an ancient Roman rite held each February 15 for the fertility god Lupercus. Goats and a dog were sacrificed, and goats' blood was smeared on the foreheads of two young men and wiped off with wool dipped in milk. Young men, wearing only

goatskin about their loins, ran around the base of the Palatine hill, striking with goatskin strips any women they met. This was to ease labor for pregnant women and to make the others fertile."

The American Heritage Dictionary, under "Lupercalia," reads: "a fertility festival in ancient Rome, celebrated February 15 in honor of the pastoral god Lupercus."

Again, even the month of February gets its name from this pagan ceremony. The Latin februae means "to purify" after this so-called "Feast of Purification." Some sources say that the thongs from the skins of sacrificed animals, which the priests used on the evening of February 14 to strike women, were called februa. So, in ancient Rome this mid-February pagan feast day known as Lupercalia, the "feast of Lupercus," was an ode to the God of fertility and a celebration of sensual pleasure.

Here's some more. Who in mythology was Lupercus? Lupercus was believed by pagans to be a hunter of wolves (Latin lupus is "wolf"), associated with the Roman god Faunus, god of agriculture and fertility. Since Rome took its gods from those it conquered, we can trace Faunus to its Greek equivalent, Pan, god of woods, fields and flocks. The ancients pictured both of these mythological beings as having a human torso, but legs, horns and ears of goats. This fits with the fact that they sacrificed goats and used thongs from their skin to strike women during this "feast."

Pan can be traced to the Phoenician sun god Baal (also a god of fertility and nature). The pagan worship of Baal historically goes all the way back to Nimrod.

In Genesis 10:9, Moses describes Nimrod as a "*mighty hunter*." In the days after the Flood, animals multiplied rapidly and caused fear among the people. Nimrod grew powerful because of his ability to fight the wild animals.

Have you ever pondered what equipment does Cupid always carry? He is always pictured with a bow and arrows, such as a hunter would have! In mythology, Cupid, also known as Nin or Ninus, "the Son," was the son of Venus. Ninus has been recorded in history referred to as Nimrod.

Venus is the Roman equivalent of the Greek goddess Aphrodite (Ceres) and the "mother goddess," Semiramis (the biblical Ashtoreth).

These pagan goddesses, usually depicted with multiple breasts or breasts extremely out of proportion to their body, symbolized fertility. The thread between Lupercus–Faunus–Pan–Baal–Nimrod –Cupid and Venus- Aphrodite- Ceres– Semiramis–Ashtoreth is fertility. The celebration of the Lupercalia was just an excuse to lower the morals and inhibitions of people, under the guise of religion.

We see this continuing in many aspects of the holidays as we move through the calendrical year.

Okay, again, why 14th February? The change from the 15th February to the 14th February, came when Pope Gelasius simply ordered it changed in AD 496. As mentioned earlier, Catholic legend speaks of an obscure martyr named "Valentine" who was put to death on February 14, AD 269, and the Catholic Church made this day a "feast day". There is nothing "festive" about a martyr's death. So it was the Catholic Church that syncretized the pagan custom of the Lupercalia into Valentine's Day.

Why did the Romans observe the Lupercalia on the 15th February in the first place?

Nimrod was supposedly born at the winter solstice. In the 21st century BC, the solstice occurred on 6th January. As time progressed, however, this date moved earlier every four hundred years or so. In Roman times, Julius Caesar ordered it fixed on 25th December. Today, it falls on 21st December. In antiquity, the mother of a male child customarily presented herself before her god for purification on the 40th day after giving birth. Remember, the Lupercalia was a "Feast of Purification." Forty days from 6th January is 15th February.

Despite its obvious non biblical roots, is it still all right to keep Valentine's Day?

Friendship and sending cards are wonderful things, and God is not opposed to romance at the right time in the right way. But, does this mean that we can, and

must certainly do this on Valentine's Day? Of course not. God is clearly against double-standards. (James 1:8)

If someone is special to you, then genuinely do those personal things regarding cards, flowers or gifts, throughout the year rather than waiting until 14th February. Also, might I add, Lupercalia included gluttony and drunkenness. (both repulsive to God).

So, my friends, it is obvious, Jesus would certainly neither keep Valentine's Day, nor would he recommend that anyone else should observe it.

Notice Deuteronomy 12:29-32 *"When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, 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; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."*

When we merge other teachings with what God instructs through the Bible, we both weaken the truth and negate and violate God's clear instructions. That's a double standard. The prophet Jeremiah was inspired by God to also warn against following customs of this world:

Jeremiah 10:2 *"Thus says the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. 10:3 For the customs of the people are vain..."*

In today's modern age, putting a "new face" or "progressive observance" on an old, ungodly observance is as wrong as the original evil. The prophet Isaiah in 5:20 wrote, *"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!"*

Christ clearly instructed us we are to *"worship God in spirit and in truth"*. (John

4:23-24)

God's way is true love of outgoing concern for the welfare of others, not our own selfish lusts and desires. God does not want us to look at other nations and other ways of worship and adopt those for our worship of Him. We are “ambassadors” of the Kingdom of God and we would be living a lie contrary to the truth of God if we went ahead and observed this day.

You and I should be careful in our worship of God. It is God who has determined God’s way of life that we should live, and not the ways of our adversary and his world. Christ talks much about God’s true values that we should follow. In Mark 7:6-7 He answered and said to them, *"Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"*

Jesus Christ is our example. We should follow His conduct. So, considering that Jesus Christ would not have kept Valentine’s Day ...should we observe it? I think it’s quite clear. I hope this longer than normal letter is helpful in your studies. Some thoughts to consider as we near the end of another week, and look forward to God’s Sabbath.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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