

YAIY NEWS



To the Heart of Valentine's Day



Every February 14 we see an “angelic” infant with a bow and arrow aiming for the heart of his “valentine.” Cupids are everywhere with bows and arrows, heart shapes, paper lace, birds and flowers. All these are associated with St. Valentine’s Day. But just where did these symbols and the celebration of the 14th of February come from? Most of all, should we be celebrating this seemingly innocent day on which so many remember sweethearts and lovers?

A Priest with a Heart

The origin of this day is not clear, as there seems to be more than one explanation. The most accepted legend is that a Roman priest named Valentine had a special feeling for young people. When the Roman Empire needed soldiers, Emperor Claudius II decreed that no one could marry or become engaged. Claudius believed that marriage made men want to stay home instead of fighting wars. The kindly Valentine defied the Emperor’s decree and secretly performed weddings for a number of young couples. He was arrested, imprisoned, and put to death.

Another legend holds that Valentine was aiding persecuted Christians and was imprisoned. A jailer and his family were so impressed by his sincerity that they became Christians themselves. Valentine was fond of the jailer’s blind daughter and by a miracle restored her sight. On the morning of his execution he sent her a farewell message signed “From your Valentine.” St. Valentine was beheaded on February 14. When he was buried, the story goes, a pink almond tree near his grave burst into bloom as a symbol of lasting love.

February 14 Fertility Festival

February 14, when Valentine is supposed to have died, was also the eve of an important Roman festival, the *Lupercalia*. On this evening, Roman youths drew names of girls who would be their partners during this spring ceremony (February came later than it does today). To the Romans, Lupercalia was serious business.

Mark Antony was master of the *Luperci* College of Priests. He chose the Lupercalia festival in the year 44 B.C.E. as the proper time for offering the crown to Julius Caesar.

On February 15 the *Luperci* priests gathered at the cave of Lupercal, where according to legend, *Romulus* and *Remus* were nursed by a mother wolf. (*Lupus* is the Latin for wolf.) Following a sacrifice, two youths of noble birth

... BE CAREFUL NOT TO BE ENSNARED BY INQUIRING ABOUT THEIR GODS, SAYING, “HOW DO THESE NATIONS SERVE THEIR GODS? WE WILL DO THE SAME.” YOU MUST NOT WORSHIP YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM IN THEIR WAY ... SEE THAT YOU DO ALL I COMMAND YOU; DO NOT ADD TO IT OR TAKE AWAY

Deuteronomy 12:30–32, NIV

*Those who
LOVE ME,
I will deliver;
I will protect
those who know
MY NAME.*

PSALM 91:14, NRSV

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were brought forward. After a ceremony, they ran through the Roman streets, lashing about with goatskin thongs. The streets would be crowded with young women, because a lash of the sacred thongs was believed to increase their fertility. The goatskin thongs were *februa*, the lashing of the *februatio*, both stemming from a Latin word meaning to purify. From it comes the name for the month of February.

Long after Rome had become a walled city and the seat of a powerful empire, the *Lupercalia* lived on. When Roman armies invaded what are now France and Britain, in the first century B.C.E., they took with them many pagan customs. Included were those of the *Lupercalia*.

By the fourth century Christianity became the dominant religion in Rome, and the *Lupercalia* was declared unlawful. Throughout the empire the church endeavored to stamp out pagan practices brought in by the heathen. "Unable to abolish some of the pagan festivals that the people loved, they accepted these and gave them Christian names" (from *The Story of Valentine Symbols*, by Edna Barth). Barth goes on to say, "So it was *Lupercalia* which survived late into the 5th century. St. Valentine's name was given to a festival that had celebrated springtime and fertility in human beings and other animals, and do what the church might, the ancient meaning never quite left it. Memories of the *Lupercalia* as a celebration of mating were handed down, attaching themselves to the saint's name."

It was the eve of the ancient feast of the *Lupercalia* when the Romans habitually preserved the memory of an ancient rural deity, Faunus. It is not difficult to imagine that the public beheading of Valentine the Christian was a pagan's victory — the priest who upheld the Bible beheaded at this heathen celebration! Frank Staff writes in his book, *The Valentine and Its Origins*, "In later years when the early Christian fathers were busy obliterating pagan superstitions and dates by substituting those of the Christian belief, names of many of the martyred Saints were used to replace the old festivals. In this way St. Valentine having suffered on the eve of the *Lupercalia*, the 14th of February, was now to perpetuate forever the memory of this festival of the return of spring when a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love and when the birds begin mating, Centuries later it was usual on St. Valentine's day for young men to draw by lots the names of young women, a custom that lingered in some of the more remote villages of the British Isles right up to Victorian times. Some accounts written during the Victorian era of St. Valentine's day maintain that putting the names of young women into a box to be drawn by the men was part of the ceremony of the *Lupercalia*, and has been repeated so often as to be believed true. But it has been authoritatively stated that this has yet to be proven."

Not all writers agree with author Staff, but see a direct connection between drawing names for Valentine's Day and the *Lupercalia*. There is strong evidence that the custom of sending valentines and other festivities on February 14 has erotic origins and it likely was a licentious festival involving peculiar fertility rites and especially involving young people. The little cherub called Cupid from the Latin *cupido* or "desire" is actually the Greek deity of love known as Eros. Alexandrian poets made him popular in Rome (*Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia*, p. 2542).

Most European countries, with the exception of Germany and Britain, have little to do with St. Valentine's Day. The customs in the United States go back to the early settlers who brought this rite from Europe.



Bottom Line: The Dollar Sign

St. Valentine's Day is perpetuated by manufacturers of greeting cards and the retail merchants who see the opportunity to induce customers to buy special gifts for their valentines. Through slick advertising the public is made to feel guilty in neglecting to give just the right gift to their valentine. The implication is that if they don't give a gift, they don't really care, for this is the day to show our love for others.

One big problem with getting involved in worldly holidays and special days, more often than not, is that man lets these days stemming from pagan practices overshadow and replace the days Yahweh has given us for our own good. Satan, the deity of this world, has many more promoters of his pagan days than Yahweh has for his Sabbath and Feast days.

To the Heart of Valentine's Day ...cont.

The merchants who seem to live from one holiday to another are all trying to make a buck — even for St Valentine's Day. They include greeting card makers, florists, cosmetic manufacturers, candy and toy makers, bakeries, and clothiers. Notice the subtle influences we are subject to when we go shopping. Signs, displays, leaflets, newspapers, magazines, TV, and greeting cards ... all call attention to their goods saying, "When you care enough to give the very best."

It is up to us as believers in the Bible not to place anything before Yahweh and His way of life. We should not wait for a special day of pagan origins to show our love to our fellow man, but to exhibit fraternal concern and love every day in every way we can. The Adversary hopes that worldly holidays will totally overshadow the really important times commanded now and which will be observed for all time in Yahweh's kingdom. See our booklet called, *Biblical Holy Days*.

It is amazing how much our world is steeped in heathen "truth-transplanting" tradition. The days of *Lupercalia* are with us even in subtle ways. Consider one writer's observation: "Today we still refer to one who fancies himself with the ladies as something of a 'wolf' and when a pretty girl walks down the street young men give a "wolf's whistle" which shows that the spirit of *Lupercalia* is still with us.

Yahweh's true Spirit is here, as well, and available to those who live honest and pure lives for Him though His righteous Son. A position of rulership in His Kingdom awaits those who do.

Holidays or Holy Days? Combined Studies booklet, by YAIY

Catholicism or Scripture?

Q. I was raised Catholic, and recently in reading the Scriptures I came across a verse that has troubled me. It reads in Matthew 1:24-25, *Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son ...* From these verses, it would appear that Joseph had sexual relations with a woman whom the Catholic Church affirms was ever a virgin. I'm confused. Which is right? the Bible or the Church?

A. In Catholicism, there is a whole body of theology called Mariology, a course of study seminary students for the priesthood undertake as part of their curriculum. Perhaps, Mariolatry would be a better word. The two verses (Matt. 1:24-25) you cite are but an introduction to a conflict the Scripture faces with the traditions touted as infallible by the Catholic Church. Further in the Scripture narrative (Matt. 12:46-50) you will read a reference to Yahshua's (the Hebrew Name given by a Hebrew maiden to the Savior) brothers and to His mother desiring to speak with Him. Two chapters later, these brothers are identified as James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:55) and that also, He had sisters (v. 56). Moreover, in John 7:3-5 we are told that his brothers (aforementioned in the Matthew narrative) did not believe in Him, but in Acts 1:14 they are numbered among the 120 who tarried ten days in Jerusalem for the promise that they should be endued with the Power from on High. So, sometime between John 7:5 and Acts 1:14, they must have had a renewing in the spirit of their mind.

Now, the Catholic Church, through taking exegetical liberty, would have you believe that these brethren of the Matthew, John, and Acts narratives were, (1) Yahshua's cousins and Mary's nephews (and nieces), or (2) Members of the fraternity which itinerated about Palestine with Yahshua, or (3) That these were Joseph's children from a previous marriage (Joseph is most often portrayed as a much older man, though there is no evidence from the Scriptures to substantiate that notion).

But what about the **first** Genesis commandment, to be fruitful and multiply? (Gen. 1:28a). If Joseph should present as a typical male, he should have exercised extraordinary powers over his own will and rule over his own spirit to preclude conjugal relations with a young woman. Were Joseph and Mary excused from obedience to this first commandment?

We are familiar with the argument that the mother of the Savior was particularly selected because she was immaculately conceived (the doctrine of the so-called Immaculate Conception, though not codified until the early 1950's) without the taint of original sin, and thus found a worthy candidate to bear the Son of Yahweh.

But if that was the case, why then did Yahweh permit Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba — all of whom have a colorful history, and two of them, Rehab and Ruth, who were not even Hebrew) — to occupy prominent place in the genealogy of the Messiah, not to mention many of the males who present with less than stellar reputation? And, moreover, what do we do with the two witnesses of Scripture (1 Kings 8:46 and Rom. 2:23) that affirm all have sinned, including Mary who, apparently, had as great a need as 119 others to be endued with Power from on High?

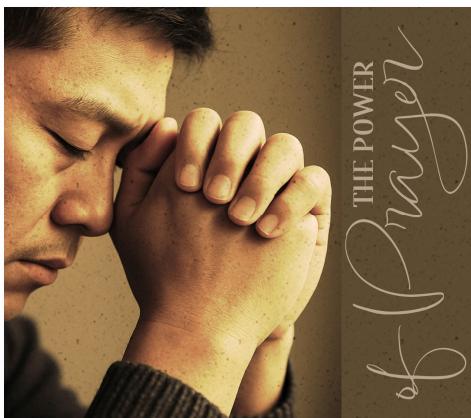
Mary is also presented by the Catholic Church — in order to satisfy their creed that she was assumed body and soul into heaven, as the Co-Mediatrix — seated at the right hand of her Son, the Mediator of humanity before the Father Yahweh, though Pope Leo X1V recently denied this tenet of Mariology as heretical. Indeed, does this conflict with 1 Timothy 6:14-16 that establishes Yahshua as the THE ONLY ONE HAVING IMMORTALITY (having been resurrected by His Father). Though Mary stood at the foot of her Son's torture stake, there is no Scriptural evidence that she, too, was impaled and that her blood should be appropriated for the remission of sin.

That Mary occupies a coordinate position with her Son Yahshua is noted, too, in that the Catholic lcalendar assigns more Feast Days — Annunciation, March 25th; Assumption, August 15th; Immaculate Conception, December 8th, the latter two equivalent to Sunday as holy days of obligation (might these become subject to papal recission?) — than they do to the Savior, Yahshua. And have you ever noticed how many of their churches are ascribed an appellative, "Our Lady of ...?"

So, which is right? Well, we are persuaded that Yahweh Who cannot lie, will always have the First and Last Word, and all shall know whose word will stand: His or the Catholic Church's (Jer. 44:28).

Prayer List

David & Barbara Creel, Robert Dorchester, Stella Rogers, Sean Rogers and Family, Loretta Reyes and Family, Michael Hutchinson, Chauncey Hargrove, David & Nancy Wilson Family/Friends, Jerry Castle, Mary Giles Family, Quinnten Allen, Kat Durban, Isaiah Davis, Dulcena Tessner, Marilyn Patterson Family, David Andrews, Kenya Washington, Elder Lionel Gets Family, Joseph Miller, Adam Galvan Family, Dianne E. Wright Family, Maria Nelson Family, Hilda Driedger, David Nathaniel Malm, Susana Malm, Mike and Sheila Kemper, Charlie Pelton, Monica Kleb, James Penn Family, Sheila Sendeyo, Robert Creech, Diane Crocker, Henry Sunderman, Eileen Pelton, Annie Pelton, David Townsend, Thomas Hunt, Valerie Freeman, Robbie Lenard, Cecil Wideman, Steven Wonderly Family, Elijah Uchenna Family, Pat Beasley, IsaYah Perkins, Linda Root Family, Karl Russell, Maria Nelson, David Salley, Richard Nesselrodt, Danny O'Connor Family, Liz Napper, William Kemsley, Henry Kipngeno Family, Richard Daniel Rodriguez, Zion Gotay, Robert Pugh Family, Ron Ayala, Tyree Jones, Ryan Irving Family, Jai Burgo, Marilyn Montague, John Laczko, Johnny Pearson, Ricardo Angolano, Vivian Wanjiru Family, Travis Handy, Janai Gé Vargas, James Emmett Jerman, Roger Kinnerson, Bertha Tedwill, John and Marcy Mallinson, Roger Kinnerson, Yuri Andrew, Oghenekaro Ugbuku, James Raum, Melodie Illgen, Jean Inman, Bobby Gruhn, Elder Heritier Bamba, Genie Berry Family, Elder Thomas Musekenya, Roman Malyk, Joe Deavors, James (Butch) Dowell, and all of the Assemblies of Yahweh in Yahshua. Please also include in your prayers individuals seeking Yahweh from within prison facilities and for their families, plus overseas brethren and especially for the peace of Jerusalem (Psa. 122:6). The world's leaders could also use our prayers (Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:2).



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