

Valentine's Day

From Bobby Joiner. 2009

The widely practiced tradition of sending cards, letters, and poems as part of Valentine's Day got a late start in America, but the tradition of celebrating the day has a long history. The origins of St. Valentine's Day stem from the days of Claudius II in the third century, when a Roman priest named Valentinus was persecuted and imprisoned for helping Christian martyrs. On the eve of his beheading, he wrote a farewell note to his friend, the daughter of the jailer. He signed the note "From Your Valentine." The day was February 14th.

Valentinus' death took place at a time of year when the pagan feast Lupercalia was celebrated. The beheading, which was public, was probably incorporated into the pagan celebration. As Christianity spread throughout the world, Christian priests began to look favorably upon pagan festivals, turning them into Christian celebrations. It is likely that Lupercalia became increasingly associated with Valentinus and his departing message, leading to the eventual popularity of sentimental cards and letters.

In England, the celebration of February 14th grew during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through gift giving and a growing superstition that the meeting of one's true love had special significance on that day. In the Americas, colonists brought with them the customs of Valentine's Day, and expressions of affection were handmade, handwritten, and usually hand-delivered. During the nineteenth century, new printing techniques, as well as creativity on the part of certain individuals, combined to foster new designs and ways of producing valentines. Valentines had previously been manufactured and imported from

England, but by mid-century, Worcester, Massachusetts, emerged as a center for the production of valentine cards. Esther Howland, a Worcester native, established one of the first commercial valentine enterprises in America. The Whitney Company, also of Worcester, followed her lead as a major manufacturer of valentines, operating until 1942.

Whether all or part of the above story is true matters very little in comparison with the following ABSOLUTE TRUTH FROM THE BIBLE:

Rom 5:1- Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.