

### 37.1 Valentine's Day Origin and Application

February 14 is a special day for couples. We fill the day with hearts, flowers, and candy. We have set it aside to be a special day to express love and appreciation. The origin of Valentine's Day is likely different than what we would imagine. Do you know the story behind the day?

Valentine's Day is a sort of love story, but it is more about a Christian resisting a tyrant. William Federer recounts the story of St. Valentine in his book, American Minute:

In the the3rd-century Emperor, Claudius II defended the Roman Empire from invading Goths. He believed single men made better soldiers, so he temporarily outlawed marriage. Claudius also forced the Senate to deify the former Emperor Gallienus. The Senate added him to the pantheon of the Roman gods for worship.

Folklore has it that Saint Valentine was a bishop in Italy who risked the Emperor's wrath by refusing to worship idols and secretly performing marriage ceremonies for young couples. The Romans brought Valentine before the Prefect of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and have his head cut off on February 14, 269 AD. While awaiting execution, the legend says that he prayed for the jailer's sick daughter, who miraculously recovered. He wrote her a note and signed it, "from your Valentine."

In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius designated February 14 as "Saint Valentine's Day."<sup>1</sup>

That is a brutal account. Valentine resisted Caesar, and it cost him his life. How many modern Christians would be willing to resist similarly?

Most American Christians have bought into almost total submission to the government. Key leaders have told us that we MUST obey the government at all costs. When we read the Bible, we discover a different point of view. God did not call His people to blend into the world. Instead, He has called us to transform the world.

Jesus calls us to be "salt and light" to the world. His Father gave Him that task, and He has transferred it to us. Being salt and light is not easy or convenient. It can be costly.

The book of Revelation tells us of some of the difficulties that the early believers had to endure. Caesar mandated that people offer a sacrifice of incense to his statue to buy or sell. That was idolatry, and they could not comply. **Revelation 11:7** (NKJV) details what some believe to be the work of Caesar against Christians. It reads:

**<sup>7</sup> When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.**

Those early believers refused to give in to the pressures of the Roman government. They chose to follow Christ any time there was a conflict of interest between Caesar and Jesus. Most would not compromise.

We know, according to **Mark 12:17** (NKJV), that we "**Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.**" That is an important lesson and distinction. What do we render to Caesar? What do we render to God?

We immediately affirm that we render Caesar taxes. Jesus did, so do we. We render prayers for Caesar, as Paul points out in **1 Timothy 2:1-2**. We render honor when it is due according to **Romans 13:7**. These are all true. What do we render to God?

---

<sup>1</sup> William J. Federer, "American Minute (St. Louis: Amerisearch, Inc., 2013), p. 51.

The truth is, we give God everything in our lives. We are to hold back nothing. In a way, we have even given up our very lives for Him. Paul wrote in **Galatians 2:20** (NKJV):

**<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

Why was Valentine able to face martyrdom? How could those early Christians die in the arena? In a sense, they had already died with Christ. The writer of Hebrews quotes from **Psalm 56** and declares in **Hebrews 13:6** (NKJV):

**So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”**

God is challenging us to make some determinations in our lives. Unless we have been hiding in our basements for the last two years, we know that authorities are trying to destroy Christ’s Church. We have to decide whose side we are on. To whom do we give allegiance, Caesar or Christ?

Ron Helle wrote in his article, “*Courage for the Things of His Kingdom*”:

**“There’s a need for courage in the corporate church today. While brothers and sisters in other parts of the world are being martyred for their faith, much of the testimony of the American church is silenced by the vocal criticism of an increasingly secular society.”<sup>2</sup>**

Today, while you are snacking on chocolates and sharing time with someone special, remember our most special One. Jesus laid down His life for us and not just at the cross. He gave His whole life for us, day in and day out. He showed us what it means to live for God.

We want our ease, but the Christian life is not always easy. Sometimes living for God means we have to show whose side we are on. The three Hebrew boys showed their allegiance in **Daniel 3:16-18** (NKJV):

**<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”**

Let’s Keep The Light of *Faithful Determination* Burning!

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://patriotpost.us/articles/86014-courage-for-the-things-of-his-kingdom-2022-02-04>