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The **VALLEY TIDINGS** is published monthly by the church of Christ, meeting at 1803 Dixie Garden Drive, Valley Station, Kentucky 40272

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Happy Valentine’s Day

Like a number of holidays tainted with a Catholic Church background, Valentine’s Day is celebrated this month. It takes its name, allegedly, from a “Saint Valentine” about whom precious little is known. History mentions an early Christian martyr named Valentine. As with other such characters, Valentine was “sainted” by the Catholic Church.

The celebration has begun with lovers sending expressions of love to the object of their deepest affection. It has evolved to sending little heart shaped cards and exchanging them with school friends, parents, and sweethearts.

Since it focuses on love it is good for Christians to think of the love God’s people need to express for fellow Christians. Paul’s words are apropos: *“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints”* (1 Thess. 3:12-13).

The best expression of love for others is in deeds done rather than greeting cards or mere words spoken. *“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth”* (1 John 3:18).



The Arabic People Of Today

Much attention is being paid to the Arabic nations of the Middle East. It is a good idea for us to learn as much as possible about them. Just who are they? With the exception of the modern state of Israel, the populace of the Middle East are Arabs. Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Iran all share the culture, religion, and language. Arabs appear to have their origin with Esau of the Old Testament. The Muslim religion is far and away the largest among Arabs.

Biblically the Arabs are associated with the *desert*. Jeremiah called on the Jews at Jerusalem to *“Lift up thine eyes unto the bare heights, and see; where hast thou not been lain with? By the ways hast thou sat for them, as an Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness”* (Jer. 3:2).

Isaiah prophesied that Babylon would be so completely destroyed that it would never again be inhabited. He added that it would be so desolate no Arab would pitch his tent there, nor would shepherds make their flocks lie down there (Isa. 13:20). There is also a reference to the Arabs who *“lived near the Cushites (Ethiopians)”* (2 Chron. 21:16, NIV).

Arabia encompasses the entire Syrian desert and the Arabian peninsula. One of the Ptolemy’s charted the Arabian Empire and divided it into three sections — the *“fertile,”* the *“stony,”* and the *“desert”* of Arabia. In ancient history, Arabia played a strategic role in God’s dealing with man. Many important kingdoms rose and fell in Arabic history. Around 1300 B.C. to nearly 600 B.C. the Minean Kingdom rose to great power. Its capital was in what today is Ma’in. At the peak of its power it ruled the entire southern part of the Arabian territory.

Other kingdoms or dynasties followed the Minaeans. In 600 B.C. the Sabeans came to power and ruled till the first century before Christ. Following the Sabeans came the Himyarites and in A.D. 300 they fell, but were followed by yet another Himyarite kingdom. There was a short interlude of rule by the Ethiopians (340 to 378 A.D.) and then by A.D. 525 the Himyarites fell completely. The Ethiopians again conquered the land and controlled it till 575 but were in turn conquered by the Persian Empire around 580 A.D.

Solomon, at the height of his power had contact with Arabs. It is said, *“besides that which the traders and merchants brought; and all the king of Arabia and the governors of the country brought gold and the silver to Solomon”* (2 Chron. 9:14). It is assumed by some Bible scholars that the Queen of Sheba was Arabian (1 Kings 10:1-10). These were the good years of Jewish-Arabic relations. The remainder of the time is characterized by friction, animosity, and war between the Jews and Arabs. When Jerusalem was conquered and plundered during the time of Jehoram, Arabs took part in the plundering. (2 Chron. 21:6). Uzziah was able to defeat them later. (2 Chron 26:7). Judgments and punishments were issued by Jeremiah and Isaiah against the Arabs. (Jer. 25:24; Isa. 21:13-17). As Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, among those who tried to stop him was one named Geshem, an Arab ruler (Neh. 2:10; 6:1-6).

A young Arab boy in the mid 600’s claimed God spoke to him and appointed him a prophet. He was called Muhammad. At that time the Arabic nations were idolaters. Muhammad began a campaign to convert them to a new religion – *“Islam”*. *“Islam”* means, *“submission.”* Muhammad claimed that *“Allah”* demands total submission to him, one way or another. A basic tenet of *“Islam”* is absolute predestination — what will be will be and can

never be changed. This young illiterate was able to convert his wife and gain a following at Mecca. At Mecca he formed a militia by which he *“converted”* others to his new religion. His sword was mightier than his message and an effective tool in Islamic conversions.

Muhammad affirmed those who *“would not receive his divine message, should drink boiling water, breath nothing but hot winds, dwell forever in continual fire, and be surrounded with a black, salt smoke, eat briars and thorns and the fruit of the tree zacron, which would be in their bellies like burning pitch.”* (*Life of Mohammad*, George Sale, page 13).

His followers spread Islam into Syria, Palestine, Egypt, northern Africa, Spain, and eastward to Persia, the Punjab region of India, and Transoxiana. Today most of the Arabs are Semitic Arabic speaking people. Ancient Persia is today known as Turkey and Iran. The Arab world is divided both politically and religiously. Some of the more radical and fanatical Muslims, known as the sect, *“Shia,”* are more prominent in Iran. From the news reports their greatest asset seems to be chanting senseless slogans, beating themselves with boards and chains, and refusing to reason rationally with anyone.

Christianity is the only true religion in this world. There is no comparison of Mohammad and Christ, even though Mohammad claimed to be greater than Christ. While some reports about the *“Islamic faith”* have been given over the newscasts as harmless and peaceful, the history of their religion is one of killing and bloodshed. Their method of conversion has been: be converted or exist as a second-class citizen in their land - pay tribute to them or die. - DRS

(Note: Much material for this article came from William E. Wallace’s notes.)

“That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular.” - Abraham Lincoln



Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it suficeth us.—John 14:5-8

