

The Christian and not-so Christian Calendar from Christmas to Pentecost

A Bible Study

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Understanding Celebrations from Christmas to Pentecost

- Epiphany
- Carnival
- Fat Tuesday
- Ash Wednesday
- Lent
- Palm Sunday
- Passover
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Resurrection Sunday
- Ascension Day
- Pentecost

Epiphany

- Epiphany, January 6, is the official end of the Christmas season, but it also kicks off Carnival season.
- Epiphany day is 12 days after Christmas.
- Some people fast during the 12 days and then celebrate the Epiphany feast on January 6th.

- Other names for Epiphany Day are Three Kings Day, Twelfth Day, Theophany, and Little Christmas.
- Epiphany commemorates the manifestation of God to the world through Jesus Christ.
- Epiphany is a feast that recognizes the manifestation of God in Jesus, and of the risen Christ in our world. It is a time for believers to consider how Jesus fulfilled his destiny and how Christians can fulfill their destiny too.

Epiphany Day is primarily observed by Orthodox, Catholic, and Anglican Christians. For this reason, many Protestant believers don't understand the spiritual significance behind this holiday, one of the earliest feasts of the Christian church.

- Epiphany, January 6, is the official end of the Christmas season, but it also kicks off Carnival season in New Orleans. Although some people use Carnival and Mardi Gras interchangeably, they are actually different things. Carnival is a time to eat, drink and be merry before the rigorous fasting and sacrifice during Lent. It is filled with parades, balls and other celebrations leading up to Mardi Gras, which is French for “Fat Tuesday.” Mardi Gras is always the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. Carnival officially ends at midnight on Fat Tuesday and Lent begins.

King Cake



January 6 until Fat Tuesday

Carnival

- Carnival is a festival held in many, predominately Roman Catholic, countries in the days leading up to Lent.
- In contrast to the Lenten season's forty-day focus on fasting and self-denial, Carnival is a time of excess and self-indulgence—a time to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we diet.”
- Carnival is the indulgence before the fast, one last binge before having to give something up for forty days.
- The most famous Carnival is held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, every year. Other Carnivals are held in Italy, Venice, Uruguay, and Spain, as well as in other parts of Brazil. In the United States, the events leading to Mardi Gras are the equivalent of Carnival.

- The basic idea behind Carnival is that you can live it up for a while—and then confess your sin on Ash Wednesday.
- In the minds of partygoers, any misbehavior during Carnival is justified. During Carnival, nothing “counts”; it’s as if it never happened. Because of the license to sin, people lie, fight, get drunk, use drugs, and engage in sexual promiscuity more than at any other time of the year.
- Carnival is typically celebrated in Catholic countries of southern Europe and Latin America.

Fat Tuesday/Mardi Gras

- Mardi Gras, which is French for “Fat Tuesday,” is the last day of a season called “Carnival.” The Carnival season is characterized by merrymaking, feasting, and dancing.
- Mardi Gras is the culmination of festivities and features parades, masquerades, and, unfortunately, often drunkenness and shameless debauchery.

Ancient Greek god Comus or Komus

- **GOD OF FESTIVITY AND REVELRY. HE WAS THE SON OF DIONYSUS AND SERVED HIS FATHER AS A CUP-BEARER**
- In Greek mythology, Comus or Komus is the god of festivity, revels and nocturnal dalliances. He represents anarchy and chaos. During his festivals in Ancient Greece, men and women exchanged clothes.

He was depicted as a young man on the point of unconsciousness from drink. He had a wreath of flowers on his head and carried a torch that was in the process of being dropped. Unlike the purely carnal Pan or purely intoxicated Bacchus, Comus was a god of excess.

- Actually, the Mardi Gras celebration originated in the pagan pre-Christian celebration originated in the pagan pre-Christian celebrations of spring. Ancient Greeks would sacrifice a goat, cut its hide in to strips and run naked through the fields while their pagan priests lashed them with the goat-hide strips. This was a part of their spring fertility rite to insure a productive harvest for their fields and increase the fertility of their flocks and women. The custom was degenerate even by pagan standards, being a time of lewdness, immorality, drunkenness and revelry and was associated with the worship of the Greek god "Pan".

Mardi Gras in America

- Mardi Gras is believed to have arrived in North America on March 3, 1699, when the French-Canadian explorer Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville camped about 60 miles downriver from the future site of New Orleans. Knowing it was Fat Tuesday back in France, Iberville named the spot Point du Mardi Gras and held a small gala. A few years later, French soldiers and settlers feasted and wore masks as part of Mardi Gras festivities in the newly founded city of Mobile (present-day Alabama). To this day, Mobile claims to have the oldest annual Mardi Gras celebration in the United States.

Ash Wednesday

- The day after Fat Tuesday/Mardi Gras is Ash Wednesday; therefore, the end of Carnival is followed immediately by the beginning of Lent. Lent is a time of fasting and penance in preparation for Easter/Resurrection Sunday.
- Carnival, then, can rightly be seen as the indulgence before the fast. It is one last “binge” before having to give something up for 40 days.

Lent

- Lent is a period of fasting, moderation, and self-denial traditionally observed by Catholics and some Protestant denominations.
- It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter/Resurrection Sunday.
- The length of the Lenten fast was established in the 4th century as 46 days (40 days, not counting Sundays). During Lent, participants eat sparingly or give up a particular food or habit. It's not uncommon for people to give up smoking during Lent, or watching television or eating candy or telling lies. It's six weeks of self-discipline.