

# The Truth about Mardi Gras

## and related holidays

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*It would be difficult to find anyone who has not heard of Christmas and Easter, but have you ever noticed the holidays that occur between those two celebrations? Terms like Epiphany, Valentine's Day, Carnival, Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday are often heard, but what does it all mean? What do these days and their symbols represent. How did they come to be considered "Christian" celebrations? The truth is going to leave you stunned!*



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The holidays of Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, and Lent are all part of a man-made religious system. As these ceremonies are investigated, we find that they all have a common source linking them together in a chain of pagan observances that ultimately lead to the Easter celebration. In the book *Customs and Holidays around the World*, Lavinia Dobler notes this procession of celebrations:

Carnival is the season of merrymaking that precedes Lent, an important Christian observance especially significant for Roman Catholics. Carnival season traditionally begins on Epiphany, January 6, and ends at midnight on Shrove Tuesday (p. 10).

Epiphany occurs 12 days after Christmas and begins the season of Carnival that is commonly known today as Mardi Gras. But what do these holidays represent, and how did they begin?

### ***The Corruption of Christianity***

The activities that occur during Carnival predate Christianity. The faithful early Church did not observe any holy day that was not found in the Bible. Eventually, true Christians were forced underground because of widespread Roman persecution. Centuries later, Emperor Constantine pronounced Christianity legal by his famous Edict of Toleration. This decree brought diverse groups of believers out of hiding. Free to openly

practice their religion, believers argued over doctrine and many separations occurred. Circumstances and days of the year involving Christ's birth and baptism were among the first issues debated. These disputes would continue for decades.

A form of Christianity developed with the expansion of the Roman Empire, but apostate church leaders adopted various dogmas, sacraments, and celebrations from the pagan cultures that had been conquered by the empire. Harboring visions of a worldwide Christian order, the Roman church/state government forced their teachings upon civilizations they now occupied. Yet it was the church that experienced the most dramatic change. As the famous historian Will Durant later wrote:

Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life in the theology and liturgy of the Church... The Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. Other pagan cultures contributed to the syncretist result. From Egypt came the idea of a divine trinity... the adoration of the Mother and Child, and the mystic theosophy that made Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, and obscured the Christian creed... From Phrygia came the worship of the Great Mother; from Syria the resurrection drama of Adonis; from Thrace, perhaps, the cult of Dionysus, the dying and saving god... The Mithraic ritual so closely resembled the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass that "Christian" fathers charged the Devil with inventing these similarities to mislead frail minds. (*This new form of*) Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient pagan world (*The Story of Civilization*, Vol. III Caesar and Christ, p. 595).

### ***Epiphany—a Link in the Chain***

The celebration of Epiphany was one of the holidays that grew out of this process. The first reference to it as a church feast was in 361 A.D. (*Ammianus Marcellinus*, XXI:ii). Today the observance carries many names. Some call it "Theophany, Festival of Lights, Twelfth day of Christmas, or Three Kings Day."

Although the names differ, all claim to reference a revealing or manifestation of Christ.

Eastern Roman churches first adopted January 6<sup>th</sup> as the date of Christ's birth; celebrating the light He brought into the world. Western churches set December 25<sup>th</sup> as Christ's nativity. However, both regions retained the commemoration of January 6<sup>th</sup> as one of three manifestations revealing Christ (*Toward the Origins of Christmas*, p. 133). These three supposed revelations are the day Christ was seen of the magi, the day He was baptized, and the time He performed the miracle of turning water into wine.

The celebrations of this day are many and varied. Perhaps the primary reason Epiphany is regarded as the beginning of the count to Easter is due to a lack of calendars in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. Because of this, the Bishop of Alexandria would announce the time of the spring observance on the day of Epiphany.

Since this day was supposed to portray advents of Christ as the light of the world, the Roman church modified preexisting aspects of the Saturnalia to form the celebrations of Christmas and the Festival of Lights. This transformation of a pagan observance is noted by Francis Weiser in the *Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*:

The liturgical feast of Christ's "manifestation" originated in the orient, in Egypt, during the third century. Modern scholars explain the date (January 6) by the fact that the Egyptians celebrated on this day their great festival of the winter solstice in honor of the sun god. The Church authorities opposed this pagan observance with a feast of the true manifestation (nativity) of the Divine Saviour King. The Christian feast, in turn, occasioned among the heretical Gnostics a feast of Christ's baptism, celebrated on the same day (p. 141).

Like the pagans who celebrated the light of the sun, believers adopted this theme by putting lights on trees and around their homes. Worshipers were encouraged to maintain these lights until

January 6<sup>th</sup> known as Epiphany or the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas. Special hymns were created for this season. A composition remains a favorite unto this day titled the *Twelve Days of Christmas*.

A belief found in Great Britain is that it is unlucky to keep Christmas decorations up after the twelfth day (January 6<sup>th</sup>). As a result, many mark Epiphany by taking down ornaments and burning their Christmas trees.



### ***Celebrating the Baptism of Christ***

Since this holiday became associated with Christ's water baptism, and turning water into wine, it is sometimes observed by what is called the "blessing of the water." Considered divine by the Eastern and Greek Orthodox churches, celebrants will meet at various bodies of water where a priest will bless it. This ritual was again adopted from ancient pagan practices. Notice the words of historian George William Douglas:

The Feast of Epiphany is first mentioned by Clement of Alexandria late in the second century... The day they observed was either January 6 or January 10. Professor Conybeare is of the opinion that the Basilides (followers of an early gnostic teacher in Egypt) selected the date because it corresponded with the date of the blessing of the Nile in Egypt and the heathen festival could therefore easily be transformed into a Christian observance. This theory is supported by the belief of St. Chrysotom that the water drawn from the rivers on

Epiphany was holy and could be preserved much longer than water drawn on other days, a literal acceptance of the Egyptian belief about the waters of the Nile. St. Chrysostom's belief about the sacredness of the waters on Epiphany survives to this day in the Greek Church (*The American Book of Days*, p. 16).

Many believe that all bodies of water are given divine properties on this day. In some countries, a priest will toss a wooden cross into the water and men compete in capturing it. This is done with the belief that whoever retrieves the cross will have his family blessed for the entire year. This practice also dates back to ancient practices of heathen who would eventually share their rites with both Christians and Muslims. As Weiser documented:



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In Palestine it was the Jordan, of course, that received this blessing in a most colorful and solemn ceremony. Thousands of pilgrims would gather on its shores to step into the water after the rite, submerging three times to obtain the great blessing. In Egypt the Nile was thus blessed for many centuries; the whole Christian population, and even many Mohammedans, would plunge into its floods three times, then drive their domestic animals into the river and, also dip pictures, statues, and crosses to obtain the Epiphany blessing (*The Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, pp. 148-149).

Believing that God blesses all bodies of water on Epiphany, “devout peasants would also break holes in the ice and throw themselves into the water in the belief that they would be cured of their diseases and remain immune to illness for the next year”

(Douglas). The drawback of a re-baptismal ceremony in some parts of the world during the winter is the freezing temperature. Regardless, in honor of their belief in a trinity, some members of the Russian churches triple dip in the frigid water believing this will wash away their sins.

### ***The True Origin of Epiphany***

As we have seen, January 6<sup>th</sup> was actually chosen as the day of Epiphany because it was central to the winter solstice and a pagan festival celebrating the birthday of the sun god. In 331 A.D. the apostate church moved the solstice to December 25<sup>th</sup>, but continued to observe January 6<sup>th</sup>. Professing Christians simply substituted the celebration of Epiphany for the traditions of the Saturnalia emphasizing a rebirth of light. However, the true origin was pagan, steeped in the worship of false gods, and the traditions of ancient religions that preceded Christianity. Charles Guignebert wrote that, throughout history:

The ritual development of Christianity advances step by step... It began with very simple practices, all taken from Judaism: baptism, the breaking of bread, the imposition of hands, prayer and fasting. Then a meaning more and more profound and mysterious was assigned to them. They were amplified, and gestures familiar to the pagans added... It is sometimes very difficult to tell exactly from which pagan rite a particular Christian rite is derived, but it remains certain that the spirit of pagan ritualism became by degrees impressed upon Christianity, to such an extent that at last the whole of it might be found distributed through its ceremonies (*Ancient, Medieval and Modern Christianity*, p. 121).

There is no question that the worship of the sun and the ancient god Saturn had a major role in the adoption of both the date and symbols now retained by the Roman church. As Assemani of the Eastern church wrote:

The Lord was born in the month of January on the same day on which we celebrate the Epiphany; for of old the

feasts of the Nativity and Epiphany were kept on one and the same day, because on the same day He was born and baptized. The reason why our fathers changed the solemnity celebrated on 6 January, and transferred it to 25 December follows: it was the custom of the heathens to celebrate the birthday of the sun on this very day, 25 December, and on it they lit lights on account of the feast. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians too participated. When, therefore, the teachers observed that the Christians were inclined to this festival, they took counsel and decided that the true birth-feast be kept on this day, and on 6 Jan., the feast of the Epiphanies. Simultaneously, therefore, with this appointment the custom prevailed of burning lights until the sixth day (*Bibl. Orient.*, II, 163).

A Professor of history at Yale University made note of a 12<sup>th</sup> century Syrian bishop who protested against Catholics desiring to insulate their holidays from pagan antecedents:

The reason, then, why the fathers of the church moved the January 6<sup>th</sup> celebration to December 25<sup>th</sup> was this, they say: it was the custom of the pagans to celebrate on this same December 25<sup>th</sup> the birthday of the Sun, and they lit lights then to exalt the day, and invited and admitted the Christians to these rites. When, therefore, the teachers of the church saw that Christians inclined to this custom, figuring out a strategy, they set the celebration of the true Sunrise on this day, and ordered Epiphany to be celebrated on January 6<sup>th</sup>; and this usage they maintain to the present day along with the lighting of lights (Dionysius Bar-Salibi, bishop of Amida, translated by Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*, p. 155).

### ***Should Christians Observe Epiphany?***

The truth is that no one really knows the actual date of Christ's birth, when the wise men visited, the day of His baptism or when he turned water to wine. Apparently, the dates were never intended to be included in the writings of the Bible. In fact, there

is no record that Christ or His apostles celebrated birthdays. As a leading third century theologian wrote:

Of all the holy people in the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a great banquet on his birthday (Origen, *in Levit., Hom. VIII*, in Migne P.G., XII, 495).

It is important to understand that the revelation of Christ at His birth was not celebrated during the days of the apostles or the New Testament Church. Notice what the *Encyclopedia Britannica* has to say regarding this:

The early Christian community distinguished between the identification of the date of Jesus' birth and the liturgical celebration of that event... In particular, during the first two centuries of Christianity there was strong opposition to recognizing birthdays of martyrs or, for that matter, of Jesus (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/115686/Christmas>, retr. 7/29/2011).

Certainly, the Savior of mankind was born. He was the light of the world. Wise men brought Him gifts, and He was baptized as an example to future believers. However, nowhere does the Bible tell us to create a holiday celebrating His birth, baptism, turning water into wine, or His resurrection. There is no instruction to light candles, triple dip in water, or compete in retrieving a cross.

Further, although the Bible lists three gifts brought to Christ by wise men from the east, it does not indicate the number of dignitaries present. By instituting these events, what the Catholic and orthodox churches have done is add to the Scriptures—something God strongly forbids (Deu. 4:2).

Further, by this, they mix a small amount of truth with numerous falsehoods. God absolutely hates such behavior because every horrible sin and faithless superstition always contains an element of truth. It is by this combination of good and evil that

unsuspecting people are led to accept iniquity. As the prophet Isaiah reiterated God's words:

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20-21).

The apostate church fathers thought they were wise to adopt the pagan rituals into the church. They thought they could confiscate them for Christ. They believed it was prudent to bring thousands of individuals into the church without requiring repentance from their pagan roots. Instead, they chose to mix truth with error which is detestable to God.

The celebration of Epiphany is a lie that has led millions into darkness; not light. These observances have caused millions to sin against the great God and the Savior of mankind. Not only is Epiphany wrong, it is the beginning of a countdown to the next link in the chain—a cesspool of sin—Mardi Gras.

### ***Carnival and Mardi Gras***

Epiphany and the Carnival season always begins on a set date, but Mardi Gras changes each year. The reason is the date for Easter Sunday changes each year. Easter is the first Sunday after the Paschal full moon, the first full moon on or after March 21. That means Easter Sunday can fall between March 22 and April 25. Mardi Gras takes place the day before Ash Wednesday and the preceding season of Lent.

Mardi Gras is a French expression meaning “Fat Tuesday.” Observed around the world for several days ending on Tuesday at midnight, Mardi Gras is a time of parties, parades, and feasting on fat things such as milk, butter, cheese, eggs, meats, and sweets. This is done in anticipation of a forty day fast of indulgences known as Lent. As Douglas also wrote:

Epiphany marks the close of the Advent season during which strict observance of their religious duties is

enjoined on the faithful. It also once marked the beginning of the carnival season which continued until Shrove Tuesday the day before Ash Wednesday. In recent years the carnival season in Europe has been confined to the three days before Lent, a custom which has been followed in the arrangements for the New Orleans carnival. It has been the custom in the United States for many secular organizations to have a Twelfth Day frolic... In New Orleans Twelfth Night is observed as the beginning of the carnival season, preliminary to the fasting of Lent. The word carnival comes from the Latin *carnem levare*, meaning to put away flesh although other derivations have been suggested. It is applied to the season of feasting and revelry preceding the abstinence of Lent (*The American Book of Days*, p. 18-19).

The Mardi Gras observance held in New Orleans may be the most well-known celebration in the United States. The French were the first to claim this territory in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and it was they who brought what was to become a massive celebration with them. Aleen Ribeiro described the early celebration:

It was thus almost inevitable that when Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, arrived at the Mississippi River on Mardi Gras eve 1699, he should have named his encampment, the first European place named in Louisiana, 'Bayou du Mardi Gras'. Some years later, in 1718, his brother founded the city of New Orleans, and for the rest of the century - in spite of the cession of much of Louisiana to Spain in 1762 - that area remained predominantly French. Although records are sparse, the carnival was certainly brought to Louisiana by the French settlers (*The Old and New Worlds of Mardi Gras*, p. 33).

In France, a fat ox has a prominent role in this celebration. A child termed, "the king of butchers," rides in a decorated cart pulled by this animal. People wear brightly colored costumes, throw confetti, and enjoy a battle of the flowers as they toss various

flora at one another. They toot horns and attend masked balls in the evening. At celebration's end, a masked man like doll is burned in effigy. In Portugal and Spain, celebrants also throw flowers, attend masquerade balls, and watch bullfights. In the celebrations of Mexico, Cuba, Brazil and other European countries, the custom is to wear unique and sometimes ugly masks while they celebrate with parades, floats, and erotic dancing. Alcohol is always a contributing element to these events (*Customs and Holidays around the World*, p. 11-12).

The custom of gallivanting about the streets while wearing masks dates back to pre-Roman times and a wanton pagan festival known as the Lupercalia. Douglas again spoke of this ancient rite and reveals how it entered the Mardi Gras celebration bringing its sinful purpose with it:

In 1827 they organized a procession of street maskers which marched about the city on the day before Ash Wednesday. In the course of time this developed into a parade of boys armed with bags of flour and cudgels who marched about the streets indulging in horse play with other marchers. The wearing of masks dates back to the Roman Lupercallian feast and survived in the Mardi Gras festivities in France and Italy... An organization known as Rex was formed during the visit of the Russian Grand Duke Alexis to New Orleans in 1872. For his entertainment it was proposed that the different bodies of maskers should be consolidated into a single group and arrange a parade in honor of the city's distinguished guest. This organization became permanent and its King was recognized as the King of the Carnival, the Sovereign Lord of Misrule (*The American Book of Days*, p. 106).

To this day the Rex organization continues to host one of the most popular parades and balls during Mardi Gras, and the Lord of Misrule is still a fundamental part of this event. It now becomes obvious who this mythical figure represents. Satan the devil is the true "lord of misrule" over this world that has caused

immeasurable pain and suffering to mankind by purposefully deceiving all humanity (2Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9).

In addition to its ties to the Lupercalia, the custom of rambunctious masquerading stems from an ancient rite to “fight against winter.” As Weiser wrote:

Just as many Christmas customs and similar observances had their origin in pre-Christian times, so, too, some of the popular traditions of Lent and Easter date back to ancient nature rites... In order to frighten the demons of winter away, and at the same time to hide their own identity, the participants in this “fight” were disguised in wild and strange costumes. Wearing masks of horrible size and shape, they ran shouting and screaming through the open spaces around their homes (*Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, p. 160).

Regarding the ever-popular masks of Mardi Gras, Margaret Fuller wrote an insightful article titled *What’s Really Behind the Mardi Gras Masks?* Her comments are eye opening, as she stated:

Behind the sequins and war paint, and deep under the light-hearted Carnival spirit, is there some quirk in the human personality that makes people want to mask? And if so, is there some twist in each individual’s psyche that makes him choose the alter-identity he does? Enter the anthropologists and sociologists, who assure us that yes, there certainly may be a darker side to Carnival... The proof is a dated drawing from southwestern France of the Dancing Sorcerer, a man dressed in a reindeer costume. Among early man, masking was considered a conduit to the supernatural. A man donned a mask and believed he was possessed by the spirit of a god or dead ancestor who was trying to communicate with the living. The individual becomes the character the mask depicts... Masking altered the state of consciousness (New Orleans Times Picayune, 1987).

In the same article, Fuller quotes Fred Koenig, a Ph. D., professor of social psychology at Tulane University who continues to reveal:

Masks are a way of being anonymous, and if you wear a mask, you take on a different persona. Among the early tribes, men who wore masks were considered crueler toward their enemies than those who did not. Certainly nobody is claiming that masking at Carnival has anything to do with cruelty. But, Koenig says, “You can be a little drunker, a little wilder, a little more primitive.” Furthermore, at Carnival people will be more tolerant of you, he says. Normal rules are gone. Traditional routines are put on hold (ibid).

From its often rowdy and risqué beginnings, this American edition of Carnival mixed with South American, Jamaican, and American Indian influence, was destined to become an outlet for immorality. As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant policy was to denounce Carnival as an idolatrous adaptation that was approved by the Papacy. Notice a portion of Thomas Naogeorgus poetic work titled *The Popifh Kingdome*. Originally written in Latin, with only a single copy presented to the Queen of England in the year 1553, what you are about to read is an English rendering of what was translated to Old English in the year 1570:

Now when at length the pleasant time of Shrovetide comes in place, and cruel fasting days at hand approach with solemn grace. Then old and young are both mad, as guests of Bacchus feast, and four days long the tipples square, and feed and never rest... All things are lawful then and done, no pleasure passed by, that in their minds they can devise as if they then should die... But some again the dreadful shape of devils on them take, and chase such as they meet and make poor boys for fear to quake... Both men and women change their clothes, the men in maid's array, and wanton wenches dressed like men do travel by the way... Some like wild beasts do run abroad in skins that divers be, arrayed and eke with loathsome shapes that dreadful are to see... Some like

the filthy form of apes, and some like fools are dressed, which best besem their Papists all that thus keep Bacchus feast. But others bear a turd that on a cushion loft they lay, and one there is that with a flap does keep the flies away... I show not here their dances yet with filthy gestures mad, nor other wanton sports that on their holydays are bad... Of truth I loathe for to declare the foolish toys and tricks, that in their days are done by their same popish Catholics... With all their force throughout the streets and market place they run, as if some whirlwind be mad or tempest great from skies should come... But even till midnight hold they on, their pastimes for to make, whereby they hinder men of sleep and cause their heads to ache. But all this same they care not for, nor do esteem a hear, so they may have their pleasure still and foolish wanton gear. The Wednesday next a solemn day to church they early go, to sponge out all the foolish deeds by them committed lo. They money give and on their heads the priest does ashes lay, and with his holy water waves all their sins away... The folly that these days is old, can no man well declare, their wanton pastimes, wicked acts, and all their frantic fare... In forty days they neither milk nor flesh nor eggs do eat, and butter with their lips to touch is thought a trespass great... Now comes the Sunday forth of this same great and holy fast, here does the pope the shriven bless absolving then at last from all their sins, and of the Jews the law he does allow, as if the power of God had not sufficient been till now (*The Popifh Kingdome or riegne of Antichrift*, Englyfhd by Branabe Googe, 1570 pp. 47b-49b, transcribed by Terry Moore).

The celebration has grown over the years into an enormous affair. Numerous krewes, or secret organizations, that sponsor specific parades or floats have arisen. Approximately one half of them sport the names of pagan gods, such as Rex, Bacchus, Chaos, Nemesis, Atlas, Hermes, Isis, Selene, Thor, Comus, Zeus, and Dionysus. This extravaganza has grown so large that people come from various parts of the world to let loose and enjoy the festivities.

The population of New Orleans alone swells to well over a million revelers calling it “the experience of a lifetime.” More than 100 parades are involved with floats that have become increasingly elaborate, parties more decadent, while the business of Mardi Gras has become the lifeblood of many metropolises. As the Associated Press described:

One of the biggest free parties in the world fuels a multimillion-dollar industry for the city of New Orleans... The Mardi Gras Season, which includes weeks of parades, fancy balls and parties leading up to the big day, draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to New Orleans each year. Some studies estimate the economic impact at more than \$500 million said Arthur Hardy, a Mardi Gras historian (*For Mardi Gras float makers, next year is already here*, <http://www.foxnews.com/travel/2012/02/20/for-mardi-gras-float-makers-next-year-is-here/>, retr. 02/20/2012).

Floats can cost upwards of \$10,000 to renovate and \$100,000 to construct. While some appear innocent, silly, or are simply parodies, others are obviously idolatrous and wicked displaying the dark heritage of this holiday.



*Pan and Medusa*



*Hermes*



*A Devil*



*Neptune*





*Bacchus*



*The great dragon called the devil (Rev. 12:9)*

### ***Deviant Sexuality Abounds***

From the earliest times in Europe, the Catholic festivities always included some variations of deviant behavior. This is a primary reason masks were worn; to cover the identity of those who, on this night, allowed themselves to act completely out of character. However, many today no longer care to hide their identity, and photos are often proudly displayed on the World Wide Web. What happens at Mardi Gras no longer stays in Mardi Gras. Wesley Shrum and John Kilburn studied the sexual trends of this holiday and published an abstract in which they stated:

During the days preceding Lent nudity is a common sight in New Orleans. Mardi Gras is a prepenitential festival—hence, licentious. Of course, the intemperate reputation of the French Quarter is long-standing. But the extent of public nudity—the open display of breasts, buttocks, and genitals is surprising to tourists and even locals who have not been there for the past few years. These displays consist of exhibitionistic “flashing,” that is, individual acts of disrobement. Such acts are deviant in most social contexts and are officially proscribed even during Mardi Gras, yet they remain common for both sexes. Intimate body parts—ordinarily concealed even from close friends—are unveiled for the acclaim of strangers sometimes numbering in the hundreds (*Ritual Disrobement at Mardi Gras: Ceremonial Exchanged and Moral Order*, Social Forces, Dec 96, Vol. 75, Issue 2, p. 434).

Shrum and Kilburn continue to compare disrobement to the commercial world. In other words, in their view it is not done so much as a result of inebriation or lack of morals, but as a kind of trade off. In their study they interviewed numerous people, and explained:

Sometimes a reciprocal exchange of nudity would be negotiated. In other cases, beads were exchanged for nudity... The beads were just part of the enticement (ibid, p. 430).



Many women show off the number of beads they had collected as a kind of public statement of their attractiveness. Some do it simply because they are exhibitionists. Others participate because of the environment, or so they won't feel out of place. The tradeoff of disrobing in public for beads has become a staple in certain parts of the Mardi Gras party. In a 2003 paper, David Redmon of Emerson College referred to this out-of-town behavior as "playful deviance." He interviewed 150 people who had participated in some form of lewd behavior by flashing breasts or buttocks, though some went so far as to perform sex acts with strangers in full view of the crowd.

### ***Lasciviousness and Mardi Gras***

Since the Sexual Revolution in the 1950s, homosexuality has invaded almost every part of society. This is especially true when it comes to Mardi Gras celebrations. The first gay krewe was Yuga or "KY." They formed to satirize the straight, aristocratic Mardi Gras traditions. Although their first ball was raided, they reorganized and their movement flourished. New gay krewes developed and today homosexual parades abound. In them, these dissidents of nature strut like proud peacocks through the streets.



### ***Alcohol and Mardi Gras***

Mardi Gras celebrations offer just about every kind of food one could imagine. But the greatest seller during this season is

alcohol. While the “let it all hang out” atmosphere is an obvious factor of drunken debauchery, the excessive use of alcohol can also be traced to the beliefs of ancient pagans. As Francis Weiser wrote about Christ’s miracle in Cana when he turned water into wine, he documented the transference of another heathen tradition:

Some scholars claim it was also occasioned by a pagan Egyptian legend that at the time of the winter solstice celebration (January 6) the gods turned water into wine, and that the Church wished to replace that pagan fiction by the memory of the historic miracle of Christ at Cana (*Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, p. 145).

By connecting a divine miracle to a pagan feast, the Roman church made it possible for new converts to continue using symbols of their pagan holiday simply by attempting to redefine their meaning. However, unlike the respectable wedding Christ attended, the excessive use of alcohol is a motivating factor of the deviant behavior of Mardi Gras. As an Associated Press article stated:

Bathed in spring-like warmth and showered with trinkets, beads and music, New Orleans reveled in the excesses of Fat Tuesday... Some in the Quarter had a sleepless night after Monday’s Lundi Gras prequel party. The drinking was in full swing again shortly after dawn, and with it came outrageous costumes and flesh-flashing that would continue until police make their annual attempt to break up the merry making at midnight when Lent begins (*Costumes, beads, consume Mardi Gras in New Orleans*, AP Top News Package, 2/21/2012, pp. 1-2).

The figures involving consumption of alcohol during this celebration are shocking. The Miller-McCune website reported:

According to a survey of 2004 attendees reported in the *Journal of Sex Research*, “68 percent of the men and 63

percent of the women reported having at least five or six drinks per sitting. Almost one-quarter of the men reported having at least 16 drinks per sitting; 15 percent of women reported the same” (<http://www.psmag.com/culture/studying-drunken-promiscuity-at-mardi-gras-8991/>, retr. 7/10/2012).

The enormous amount of drinking alone is evidence of the danger of observing this festival. It is nothing that any true Christian should be associated with. As Paul warned us:

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person (1 Corinthians 5:11, NKJ).

Lascivious and drunken behavior is sin and abhorred by God. Understanding this, a vital question must be considered. What does God think of these celebrations?

### ***Consider the Origin***

The Mardi Gras festival, filled with excess of every kind, is an example of human inhibitions run wild. But unmasking its true origin reveals an orgiastic celebration honoring the gods of licentiousness. An article written in the *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* relates that Carnival is a:

...communal celebration, especially the religious celebration in Catholic countries that takes place just before Lent. Since early times carnivals have been accompanied by parades, masquerades, pageants, and other forms of revelry that had their origins in pre-Christian pagan rites, particularly fertility rites that were connected with the coming of spring and the rebirth of vegetation. One of the first recorded instances of an annual spring festival is the festival of Osiris in Egypt; it commemorated the renewal of life brought about by the yearly flooding of the Nile. In Athens, during the 6th century B.C., a yearly celebration in honor of the god (of

wine) Dionysus was the first recorded instance of the use of a float. It was during the Roman Empire that carnivals reached an unparalleled peak of civil disorder and licentiousness. The major Roman carnivals were the Bacchanalia, the Saturnalia, and the Lupercalia. In Europe the tradition of spring fertility celebrations persisted well into Christian times, where carnivals reached their peak during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Because carnivals are deeply rooted in pagan superstitions and the folklore of Europe, the Roman Catholic Church was unable to stamp them out and finally accepted many of them as part of church activity... The church succeeded in dominating the activities of the carnivals, and eventually they became directly related to the coming of Lent (*Carnival*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition).

The transformation of pagan rites became a standard practice of the Roman church. It was their means of converting the masses while not causing hostility among the people by removing the holidays they enjoyed. This is also noted by Weiser who wrote:

Since carnival is a time of feasting and reveling, it was only natural that many elements of pre-Christian spring lore should have become part of the celebration. Lent excluded the boisterous practices of mumming and masquerading, so what better time could be found for it than the gay days of the carnival? ... The pre Christian element of the carnival frolics in the Latin countries seems to be a growth of the Roman Saturnalia, a pagan feast in honor of the field god of Saturnus held annually in December... The Popes as temporal rulers of their state, acknowledged the carnival practice in Rome by regulating its observance, correcting its abuses, and providing entertainment for the masses (*Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, pp. 166-167).

While the religious organization that became known as the Roman Catholic Church may have attempted to “regulate” the festivities of Carnival, as can easily be seen, it has retained the depravity of its pagan origins. The truth is, no one could ever wash

away the ungodliness of this celebration and make it holy because God was NEVER a part of this holiday.

### ***God's Perspective***

Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and even Palm Sunday are intimately connected to the wayward activities of Mardi Gras; and while Mardi Gras is supposedly associated with saying farewell to illicit behaviors of the flesh, in truth, it involves wrongfully indulging the flesh. Its observance flies in the face of God and His law. Displaying pompous hostility toward God's wholesome way of life, Mardi Gras casts morality aside and replaces it with debauchery. Notice what the Apostle John wrote:

For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world (1 John. 2:16).

In this verse John described what motivates activities such as those of the Mardi Gras celebration. In fact, when we consider the Ten Commandments, the iniquity of Mardi Gras is blatantly exposed. Though it has masqueraded as a religious observance, and it may be according to pagan standards, it never was, is, or will be considered holy. The Bible teaches us to be moderate in what we eat and drink, and to do everything to the glory of God (1Cor. 10:31), Mardi Gras advocates leaving all restraints behind. This is in direct opposition to the Word of God which admonishes us to:

Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11).

As another example, sexual acts are to be kept within the bounds of marriage. Sex outside of marriage is fornication and a sin once punishable by death (Jude 7). Sex with partners other than your mate is adultery and grounds for the same punishment. Homosexuality is an abomination that God utterly detests. But today people flagrantly participate in all of these wicked behaviors. Notice how the Apostle Paul so accurately described our age:

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them (Romans 1:26-32).

Perhaps the worst aspect of Mardi Gras is the flagrant honoring of false gods. Not only do over half the krewes display the names of pagan Greek and Roman gods, many of the rites belonging to ancient heathen societies are acted out as if they are legitimate forms of worship. The names, themes, and images of other gods are everywhere. However, the Almighty unequivocally states:

And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth (Exodus 23:13).

This passage of holy writ is an exact match to the activities and attitudes of many in our age—particularly those who celebrate Mardi Gras. While it may appear exciting and fun on the outside, what most people don't realize is that it is a demonic holiday inspiring millions to literally wallow in sin. Even the symbolism of a bull leading the parade is reminiscent of the golden calf Israel fashioned after leaving Egypt (Exo. 32:23-31).



Christians need to realize that these modern perversions of ancient pagans are just as great a sin today as they were in the past! This drunken revelry is simply giving in to perverse human nature. It does not reflect the moderation taught in the Scriptures. As Paul wrote:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

Mardi Gras is rife with fornication, drunkenness, gluttony, idolatry, lawlessness and even witchcraft. The entire celebration is about reveling in some form of sin. It is not a holiday that should be celebrated or advocated by any true Christian. You need to understand this truth. Those who celebrate Mardi Gras will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

### ***Ash Wednesday***

Mardi Gras is also known as “Fat Tuesday.” Ending at midnight, the police then clear the streets in preparation for the next day, Ash Wednesday—the first day of Lent. This next link in the chain is an outward expression that an individual is beginning

forty days of penance prior to the celebration of Easter. It has come to be a symbol of humility accompanied by what observers consider an imitation of Christ's forty day fast. Regarding this observance, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* explains that:

It was the practice in Rome for penitents to begin their period of public penance on the first day of Lent. They were sprinkled with the ashes, dressed in sackcloth and obliged to remain apart until they were reconciled with the Christian community on Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter. When these practices fell into disuse (8th-10th century), the beginning of the penitential season of Lent was symbolized by placing ashes on the heads of the entire congregation... In the modern Roman Catholic Church on Ash Wednesday the worshiper receives a cross marked on the forehead with ashes... (Vol. 1, p. 620).

Most readers must admit there are ironies in the Catholic observance of Ash Wednesday. The first of these is that, on Ash Wednesday, people mark their foreheads as a symbol that they are fasting. However, Christ actually forbade such outward displays of supposed righteousness:



Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly (Matthew 6:16-18).

A second irony is found in the very symbol believers use to portray Christ. A cross is proudly displayed by church

members, but the Savior was not actually crucified on a cross. The word that the King James translators rendered as “cross” in the Bible is the Greek word *stauros*” Found 28 times in the New Testament, *stauros* is defined as “an upright post or stake” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, G4716). In other places the Scriptures declare that Christ was hanged on a tree symbolizing a single beam of wood (Acts 5:30, 39; 13:29). W.E. Vine explained that:

*stauros* (G4716) denotes, primarily, “an upright pale or stake.” On such malefactors were nailed for execution. Both the noun and the verb *stauroo*, “to fasten to a stake or pale,” are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two beamed “cross.” The shape of the latter had its origin in ancient Chaldea, and was used as the symbol of the god Tammuz (being in the shape of the mystic Tau, the initial of his name) in that country and in adjacent lands, including Egypt. By the middle of the 3rd cent. A.D. the churches had either departed from, or had travestied, certain doctrines of the Christian faith. In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and symbols. Hence the Tau or T, in its most frequent form, with the cross-piece lowered, was adopted to stand for the “cross” of Christ (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 138).

The symbol of a cross is not a true Christian symbol. The Roman church adopted its use in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, p. 475). The T symbol was actually based in the worship of a false god known as Tammuz, and its Christian espousal was based on a vision Emperor Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. He looked at the sun on the day before an important battle and saw a cross of light. Winning the battle of Milvian Bridge, he began to use this icon as a means of unifying the pagans and Christians into a single people within his kingdom.

As a sun worshiper, Constantine's cross was in the form of a four-spoke wheel; dividing the shape of the sun into the four seasons of the year as some modern crosses continue to depict. For more on this subject see our booklet titled *The Truth about the Cross*.



*Plaque of a Celtic Seasons Cross*

Millions of church members continue this practice each year without considering that God forbids such a ceremony in which individuals literally carry the mark of a false god in their forehead. In addition, although God commands a fast day, it is not these days of partial fasting. He commands the Day of Atonement which is a 24-hour period when no food or drink is consumed (Lev. 23:32). This is the fast God declares and it is the one He respects—not Ash Wednesday!

### ***The Celebration of Lent***

Ash Wednesday begins the forty-day period of Lent. It starts at midnight immediately following the end of the decadent Mardi Gras festival. It is a time of abstinence designed to imitate Christ's forty day fast. However, this too is filled with irony.

For example, unlike Christ's abstinence of all food and drink, Lent originally required only meat to be avoided. This moderate self-denial soon allowed people to choose for themselves what they want to temporarily abstain from. It could be coffee,

chocolate, smoking, television, or whatever the individual believes is a pleasurable habit.

Secondarily, individuals anticipate this halfhearted fast by allowing themselves to overindulge and then follow their premeditated gluttony with 40 days of supposed penance. Celebrants think they are making a personal sacrifice for Christ, but Lent is nothing more than a mockery of what Christ endured in order to qualify to be our Savior.

Further, nowhere does God command the observance of Lent, nor can the term be found anywhere in the Bible. Like all the other observances leading to Easter, Lent's origin comes from pagan rites observed prior to Christ's appearance on the earth. Recognizing this fact, the Roman church does not require its members to observe these 40 days. In fact, most scholars and historians agree the origin is not biblical. For example, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the theologian monk John Cassian admitted:

Howbeit you should know that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Ser. II, Vol. XI: the Works of John Cassian, Ch. XXX).

The term "Lent" simply means "spring." Hence, the celebration originated in the observation of this season. According to Alexander Hislop:

"It ought to be known," said Cassianus, the monk of Marseilles, writing in the fifth century, and contrasting the primitive Church with the Church in his day, "that the observance of the forty days had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate." Whence, then, came the observance? The forty days' abstinence of the Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, "in the spring of the year," is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan Devil worshippers of Kurdistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent was held of forty days by the pagan

Mexicans, for thus we read in Humboldt, where he gives account Mexican observances: “Three days after the vernal equinox... began a solemn fast of *forty days* in honour of the sun.” Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt, as may be seen on consulting Wilkinson’s *Egyptians*. This Egyptian Lent of forty days, we are informed by Landseer, in his Sabean Researches, was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god... Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz... (*The Two Babylons*, pp. 104-105).

As the Roman Empire expanded, it brought churches under its authority. Consequently, religious leaders adopted numerous pagan festivals in those nations; giving their customs Christian sounding names. The ceremony of Lent is a case in point. It was not until the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century that it became more or less a uniform observance. However, an interesting story reflects how it came to be 40 days long. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* states:

In the time of Gregory the Great (590-604) there were apparently at Rome six weeks of six days each, making thirty-six fast days in all, which St. Gregory, who is followed therein by many medieval writers, describes as the spiritual tithing of the year, thirty-six days being approximately the tenth part of three hundred and sixty-five. At a later date the wish to realize the exact number of forty days led to the practice of beginning Lent upon our present Ash Wednesday (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09152a.htm>, retr 7/12/2012).

Though the observance of Lent is not biblical, the Scriptures actually foretell of how many would begin to adopt of pagan ideologies and attempt to graft them into Christianity; and they strictly forbid such practices. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

### ***Palm Sunday***

Another ceremonial link takes place the Sunday before Easter. It is observed in celebration of the day that Christ rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. At that time, the people cut down palm branches and laid them, or their clothing, in Christ's path as they shouted Hosanna meaning "save now" (Mat. 21:5-9).

Today, it is primarily the Catholics who have a special service to honor that event. Palm branches are carried by observers who will often walk from one church building to another. In areas where palms are not available, branches of other types of vegetation are used such as olive or willow trees. In several European countries the day is known as Blossom Sunday. After the procession, palm branches will be saved and burned the next year to provide the ashes for Ash Wednesday (*The American Book of Days*, p. 187).



The first problem with this ceremony is that God never tells us to celebrate it. Further, the biblical holy day that we are commanded to observe required a family to take a lamb without blemish into their home on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month (Exo. 12:3). It is believed that Christ, who is our Passover (1Cor. 5:7),

entered Jerusalem on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan; exactly four days prior to His crucifixion not seven days as Palm Sunday suggests.

### ***Maundy Thursday***

Following Palm Sunday, Catholics celebrate the next of their holiday links—Maundy or Holy Thursday. The term “maundy” means “commandment.” To many, it is Christ’s command in which, after washing the apostle’s feet, the Savior said, “I have given you a new commandment that you love one another” (John 13:34). Some churches hold a foot washing ceremony the evening prior according to the biblical method in which each day begins at sundown the prior evening (Gen. 1). Participants believe that, by this, they are celebrating the Savior’s last supper. However, those who observe this ritual never actually count the days.

Christ was not taken Thursday night and crucified Friday. If this were the case, He would have been in the grave only two nights and one day. The truth is, He was in the grave three full nights and three full days just as the Savior foretold (Mat. 12:40). For more on this subject see our booklet regarding the actual *Day of Christ’s Resurrection*.

### ***Good Friday***

Another link binding individuals to this long string of false religious observances is known as Good Friday. It is unthinkable for true Christians to consider that the day that Christ was abused and killed was “good.” However, this occasion is celebrated by many on the Friday before Easter. It is supposed to commemorate the day of Christ’s terrible beating and ultimate crucifixion. Catholics believe this occurred on a Friday because the scriptures state that Jesus was crucified on a preparation day (Luke 23:54). They overlook the fact that this was not the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath. It was actually the Passover when Christ died for humankind and that day was the preparation for an annual Sabbath; the first day of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:5-6). As the Scriptures tell us:

Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (**for that Sabbath was a high day**), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away (John 19:31).

When the Bible speaks of high days, they are referring to the annual Sabbaths. These seven holy days are kept yearly, and each one foreshadows a pivotal event in God's plan for mankind. Therefore Christ, our Passover, fulfilled the meaning of this day by dying on the Passover prior to the first day of Unleavened Bread which is an annual pilgrimage feast (Lev. 23:4-7; 1Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:17).

### ***Easter Sunday***

Finally, the last link binding many to these false holidays is none other than Easter Sunday. Tens of millions flock to various churches, often to attend sunrise services, believing that Christ rose on a Sunday. However, nothing could be further from the truth. When the women came to the tomb on Sunday morning, it was still dark and Christ was already gone (John 20:1). The entire Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection is a complete fabrication. Rising early to watch the sun come up originated from none other than ancient sun worship (Eze. 8:16).



Easter does not celebrate Christ's resurrection. It actually honors an ancient goddess of fertility known as Ishtar, Eoster, Astarte, and called Ashtoreth in the Bible (1Kin. 11:5). Although most professing Christians believe Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, its roots can be traced to ancient civilizations that existed long before the birth of the Messiah. The ancient civilizations of Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Persia, and Greece all embraced religious rites reflected in the holiday called Easter. In fact, the name Easter does not come from the Bible, but rather from the name of an ancient goddess of spring. Consider the words of *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia*.

The name Easter comes from the ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring. Eostre or Ostara, in whose honor an annual spring festival was held. Some of our Easter customs have come from this and other pre-Christian spring festivals (Vol. 4, p. 140).

The famous historian Alexander Hislop clearly indicated that the term "Easter" is not Christian, but rather Chaldean in origin. He wrote:

It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar (*The Two Babylons*, p. 103).

### ***What Should You Do?***

From the darkest part of winter to the beginning of spring, the Roman church has adopted and designed a toxic mix of holidays that are clearly not biblical. Most of these celebrations are based on the pagan worship of seasonal false gods (Jer. 10:1-2). These are days and observances that Christians must avoid! Christ plainly told us that we are to worship God in spirit and truth (John

4:23). We are not to keep times and seasons. As the Apostle Paul reminded the Galatians:

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain (Galatians 4:9-11).

Those who claim to be worshipping God by their observance of Epiphany, Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter are worshipping Him in vain! They may not realize it, but they are doing the opposite of what God commands. As Mark wrote in his gospel:

In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (Mark 7:7).

Each of these celebrations has the same source. Their birth place is Babylon with its false holidays and licentious doctrine. Each observance has a link connecting one to another in such a way that keeps people in a state of spiritual blindness. As the ancient prophet Isaiah explained, from God's point of view, such people are spiritually intoxicated:

Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with intoxicating drink. For the LORD has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, *namely*, the seers. The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I cannot, for it *is* sealed." Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I am not literate." Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their

lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men (Isaiah 29:9-13).

Those who participate in these “religious” holidays are drunk, but not with wine. They are inebriated by the false doctrines concocted by the minds of bogus ministers. They may read the Bible, but they clearly do not understand it. They are blinded to the truth, and so they create their own worship from the traditions, ideas, and perceptions of men.

For example, when the Scriptures speak prophetically, a woman portrays a church. The Bible foretold that such a woman would develop through the ages having enormous influence over various civilizations. Calling itself the Roman Catholic Church, this religious entity entered into relationships with various kings of the earth. When the Roman Empire united with this religion, it called itself the “Holy Roman Empire.” The church/state government brought various kings under its control, and the church absorbed many pagan celebrations giving them Christian names. The Apostle John wrote of this church, calling her a “great whore:”

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with

the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement (Revelation 17:1-6).

When it came to the civil side of this union, God also identified it symbolically. Through John, God revealed the time of Christ's return when He will finally destroy this false religious system. As his vision unfolded, the apostle saw an angel who proclaimed:

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues (Revelation 18:2-4).

The Almighty God has identified the source of these extra-biblical holidays and celebrations. We need to take heed and understand what they are and where they came from. We need to know why true Christians must not have anything to do with them. We must break free of these false religious chains that bind us and blind us; so that we can finally come to see the glorious truth of God.

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, audio, and video to help people better understand the Bible. Some of the printed material available includes:

*This is Not the Only Time of Salvation*

*The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*

*The Truth about Halloween*

*The Truth about Christmas*

*The Truth about Heaven*

*What it Means to be Born Again*

*The Truth about Tithing*

*The Truth about Easter*

*The Shocking Truth about Valentine's Day*

*The Truth about Halloween*

*The United States and Britain in Prophecy*

*The Truth about The Cross*

*The Ten Commandments*

*Understanding the Mark of the Beast*

*The Day of Christ's Resurrection*

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