

SHOULD CHRISTIANS PARTICIPATE IN MARDI GRAS?



By: Matthew D. Dyer

Living in South Louisiana as soon as Christmas and New Years are over everyone automatically goes into decorating and dressing for the “holiday” known as Mardi Gras. Just with the words Mardi Gras you have already had thoughts of drunkenness parties and women pulling up there bare breast to “earn” colorful beads. The parties and parades begin weeks in advance from the actual day, and it brings in millions of dollars to the state and surrounding communities. New Orleans seems to be the capital in the United States for the Mardi Gras festivals, although it is celebrated around the world. The city of New Orleans stated in 2009 that Mardi Gras celebration resulted in a direct economic

impact of **\$145.7 million** and an indirect impact of \$322 million to the city. It’s not hard to see where the motivation is to do these celebrations, and that is **MONEY**. I have read booklets and heard sermons concerning the origins of Christmas, Easter, Halloween and the question of whether Christians should be involved in such events. But I have never read much concerning Mardi Gras; but when you ask someone of its origins they state that it is a “Christian” holiday. This tract is to put that statement to the test, and let you decided for yourself using the Bible. Is Mardi Gras “Christian” and Biblical? Or is it a pagan tradition?

What is Mardi Gras?

Mardi Gras simply means “Fat Tuesday” in French, which is another name for Mardi Gras. The date changes from time to time, but is always 47 days before Easter. Fat Tuesday is the traditional name for the day before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent in the Roman Catholic Church. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent which is a Catholic preparation before Easter. Catholics are supposed to not eat meat (This doesn’t include fish, which Catholics consider to not be meat) and stop doing sinful deeds during this time like swearing, smoking, drinking, ect. This may seem harmless enough, but Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday is the day in which they are to feast (some even glutton) on “meat” and sinful deeds before their fast of such things.

No where in the Bible can one find where we as Christians are supposed to partake of sinful deeds prior to starting a fast deeds. Indulging on as much sin as possible until a period of temporally fasting does not make one think that God’s way is the correct way and that sin is really that bad. It says in *Romans 13:14* ***“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*** This does not show God the 100% commitment that he requires of us in *Romans 12:1-2* ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”***

According to Catholic.org *“the celebration of Mardi Gras has its roots in the pagan Roman celebration of Lupercalia. This was a February holiday and it honored the Roman god of fertility. It involved feasting, drinking, and carnal behavior. However, with the rise of the Church in ancient Rome, Christian teaching and morals took root, but there always remained a strong need to blend ancient Roman traditional practices with the growing Christian faith. The blending of tradition with new religious*

beliefs was a common practice in the ancient world and it helped people to transition away from paganism.”

Mardi Gras or Lent are not commanded in the Bible; but come from pagan beliefs that the Roman Catholic Church integrated into church tradition. Just like the origins of Easter and many other Catholic doctrines. What does God think about such pagan beliefs and customs? Read Deuteronomy 12:29-32 where it says ***“When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it”.***

The apostle Paul gave us a second witness to this as well in 2 Corinthians 6:14–18 ***“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?***

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Is it clear that our Lord wants us to remain pure and separate from things that are not of God. Read your Bible and ***“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”*** as it says in 2 Timothy 2:15.

Mardi Gras “Krewes”

It is interesting to note that most of the parades in New Orleans are put on by groups known as Krewes. They are secret private groups in New Orleans formed in the 1850’s to help organize parades to help keep violence down. The first Krewe was called the Mystick Krewe of Comus (the Greek god of revelry). Today there are over 70+ Krewes. They are mainly responsible for coming up with Mardi Gras symbols and keeping the traditions going (at least in New Orleans).

Here is only some of the names of Krewes that reside in New Orleans. Do these sound Christian to you? Are they glorifying Jesus Christ? Are you glorifying Jesus Christ by promoting Mardi Gras?

Knights of Babylon

Krewe of Iris (Greek goddess of the rainbow)

Krewe of Isis (Egyptian goddess)

Knights of Nemesis (Greek goddess of retribution)

Krewe of Nyx (Greek goddess of the night)

Krewe of Okeanos (Greek god of oceans and fertile valleys)

Krewe of Oshun (Oshun is named for the Yoruba goddess of love and intimacy)

Krewe of Perseus (Greek hero who slew Medusa)

Krewe of Thoth (Thoth is named for the Egyptian Patron of Wisdom and the Inventor of Science, Art and Letters)

Krewe of Argus (Greek god Argus, the all-seeing with one hundred eyes)

Krewe of Hermes (Greek mythos of the winged courier of the gods)

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