

Russians Celebrate Christmas / Why some Orthodox Christians celebrate Nativity (Christmas) on 7th of January

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Merry Christmas to all Eastern Orthodox Christians!

I wish to all my Russian blog readers Christ's blessings, Wisdom of the 3 Wise man following the star. Humility of Christ for being born in a Cave and love of Mother of God Virgin Mary and Joseph to the incarnated Lord in flesh, Joy of the universe for the Universe rejoiced seeing the birth of the savior of us sinful humans!

On 7th of January, the day on which [biggest part of Eastern Orthodox Church,- Russian Orthodox Church along with Ukrainian, Macedonian, Croatia, Serbian Arabic and part of Greek orthodox Church and Holy Mount Athos celebrate the day of Christ's birth.](#) The **original place where the Lord Jesus Christ was born as we read in the Gospels is Bethlehem.** According to Church tradition *on top of the Cave (known as Grotto) where the savior was born a Church basilica was built around year 333 A.D..*



The first Church building on top of *Nativity Cave* begun by **Saint Helena**, the mother of **saint Emperor Constantine**.



The Basilica was destroyed a couple of times throughout the 3th, 4th, 5th, 10-th , 14-th and 18-th centuries in attempt to wipe out memory for Christ's birth and futile attempt of early times Roman emperors to destroy christianity.

Today Bethlehem Church is situated on Palestinian territories and place for pilgrimage of both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians. Its

interior is a very interesting mixture of a classic Orthodox Christian and a Roman Catholic basilica.



There is plenty of confusion and misunderstanding on the topic **why bigger part of Christians worldwide celebrate Christmas on 24th against 25th of December** and **why more than half of Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrate on 6th against of 7th of January?**

In fact it is interesting fact that in the early Christian one holy apostolic Church, Christmas and Eastern was celebrated many times as this two feasts since beginning of the Church are center of *Christian faith*. In later times, when Church was already formed as an Eastern and Western Church, there are Church canons on exact date to celebrate Christmas and Eastern following the **Julian Calendar** (introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BC). In later times with development of Science it was found that this calendar was not so precise and another Church calendar was introduced in y. **1582** by Roman Catholic **pope Gregory XVIII** (Gregorian Calendar named after pope). I will not get into details but from modern science Astronomical point of view Gregorian calendar is more scientifically correct. The Gregorian calendar quickly become in secular life because of its mathematical precision. And by Western Roman Catholic church Influence and desire to be more scientifically correct parts of the Eastern Orthodox Church partly accepted use of the Gregorian Calendar for counting the Church feasts. Because of that many of the feasts in those Eastern Orthodox Churches moved in forward with 13 days like the Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox Church. However due to Church canon part of the feasts in Eastern Church can't be celebrated according to the *Gregorian Calendar* dates. Most important feast dates is the Resurrection day (Eastern), which according to Orthodox Church rule has always to be one week after the **Jewish Pascha**. There are plenty of problems that emerged due to change of acceptance of reformed Church calendar in part of the Eastern Orthodox Church, however what is most important is that the difference doesn't separate Orthodox Christian it just gives us reason to celebrate feast twice :)