



Coptic Church Calendar

How does it work?

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church,
East Brunswick, NJ. USA



Main Point

- Origin of the Calendar
- Difference in Calendars
- Liturgical Seasons
- Church Readings



Origin of the Calendar

- We see daily changes (24 hours)
- We see seasonal changes that are repeated over a period of time (summer, winter, floods).
- Egyptians were one of the first nations to establish a calendar.



What changes?

- The moon cycles over a 4 week period
- The location of the sun in the sky
- the length of the day (how long is the sun out?)
- The location of the stars
- The annual flood
- Temperature (summer, winter, spring)
- The duration of the change is 365.25 days (365 every year, 366 leap years)

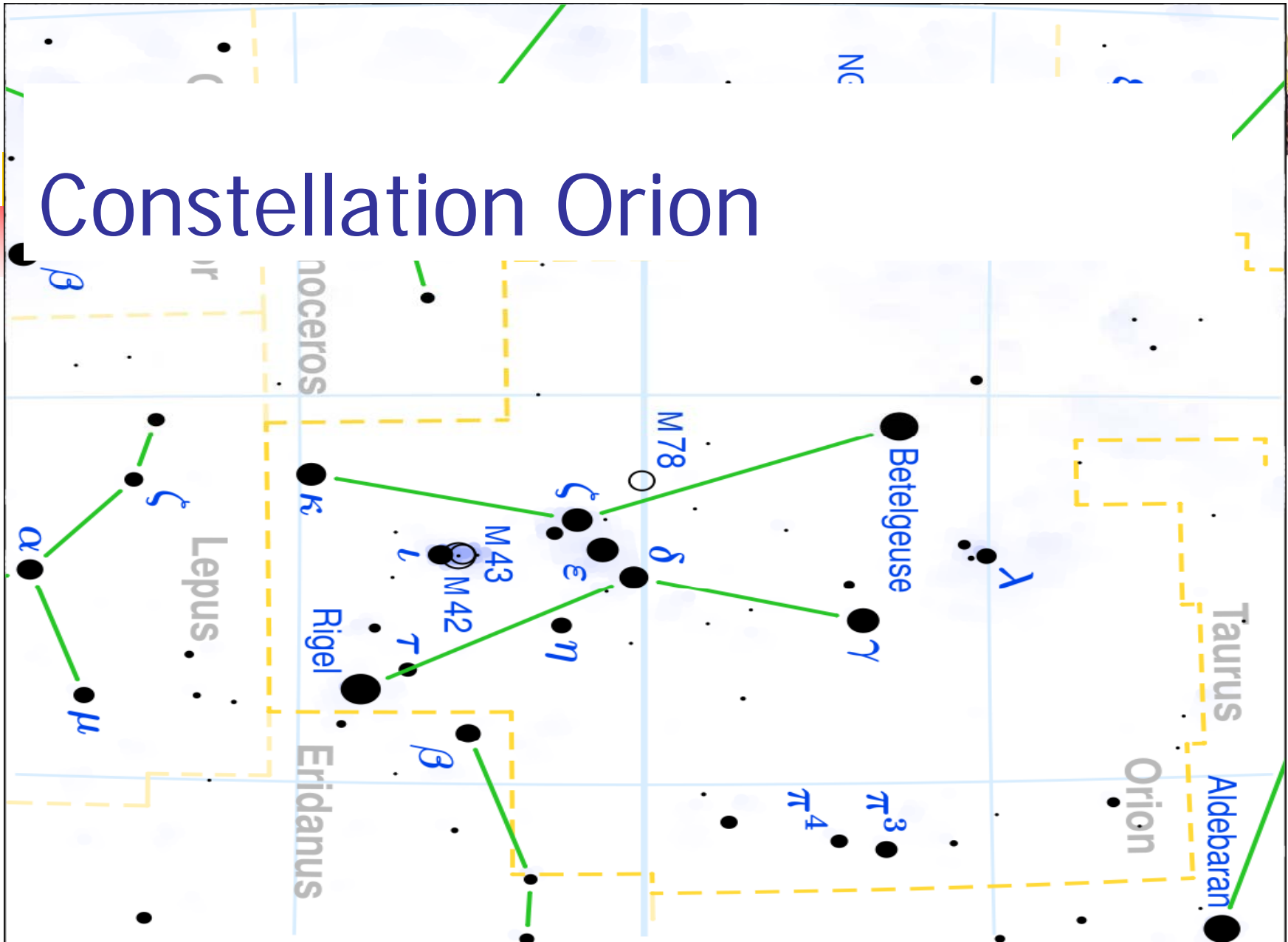


Types of Calendar

- Lunar (Jewish, Islamic, Indian)
- Solar (Modern Calendar (a.k.a. Gregorian))
- Celestial (Coptic)

The Egyptians tracked a star in the constellation Orion that peaked with the peak of the Nile's flood

Constellation Orion



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Months of the Coptic Calendar

- Tut, Babah, Hathour
- Keiahk, Tooba, Amsheer,
- Baramhat, Baramodah, Bashanse
- Baoonah, Ebib, Mesra,
- Nasee
- Each Month is 30 days, the extra month (forgotten) is 5 days (6 days during leap years)



Coptic Seasons

- Baounah 12 – Babah 9
(June 19 – October 19)
the Flood Season (the Waters)
- Babah 10 – Toubah 10
(October 20 – Jan 19)
The planting (after the flood)
- Toubah 11 – Baounah 11
(January 20 – June 18)
the Harvest and the Weather



Julian Calendar

- With the spread of the Roman Empire, Julius Caesar asked an Alexandrian astronomer (Sosigen) to create a roman calendar that dates to the foundation of Rome.
- The new calendar was 12 months.
- July (when Julius Caesar was born) was 31 days.



More Changes

- As Augustus Caesar came to power, he added a day to the month he was born in (borrowed from February).
- We ended up with July and August as 31 days and February as 28 or 29 days.
- Some say that the irregularity in July and August was their prior to Augustus Caesar



Year Numbering

- It used to be dated to the Roman Counsels or Roman Emperor and not necessarily the foundation of Rome
- Similar to how the Jews referred to events to the reign of kings
- in 525 it was proposed to be dated to Christ's birth



Gregorian Calendar

- In the 16th Century Pope Gregory XIII of Rome, discovered a difference of 12 minutes per year between the Julian Calendar and the rotation of the earth around the sun.
- This adds to 1 day every 134 years
- He accounted for 12 days of accumulated difference since the birth of Christ until the year 1582



What happened?

- To adjust the difference there was a need to cut the year short by 12 days,
- date changed from September 2nd , to next day be September 14th



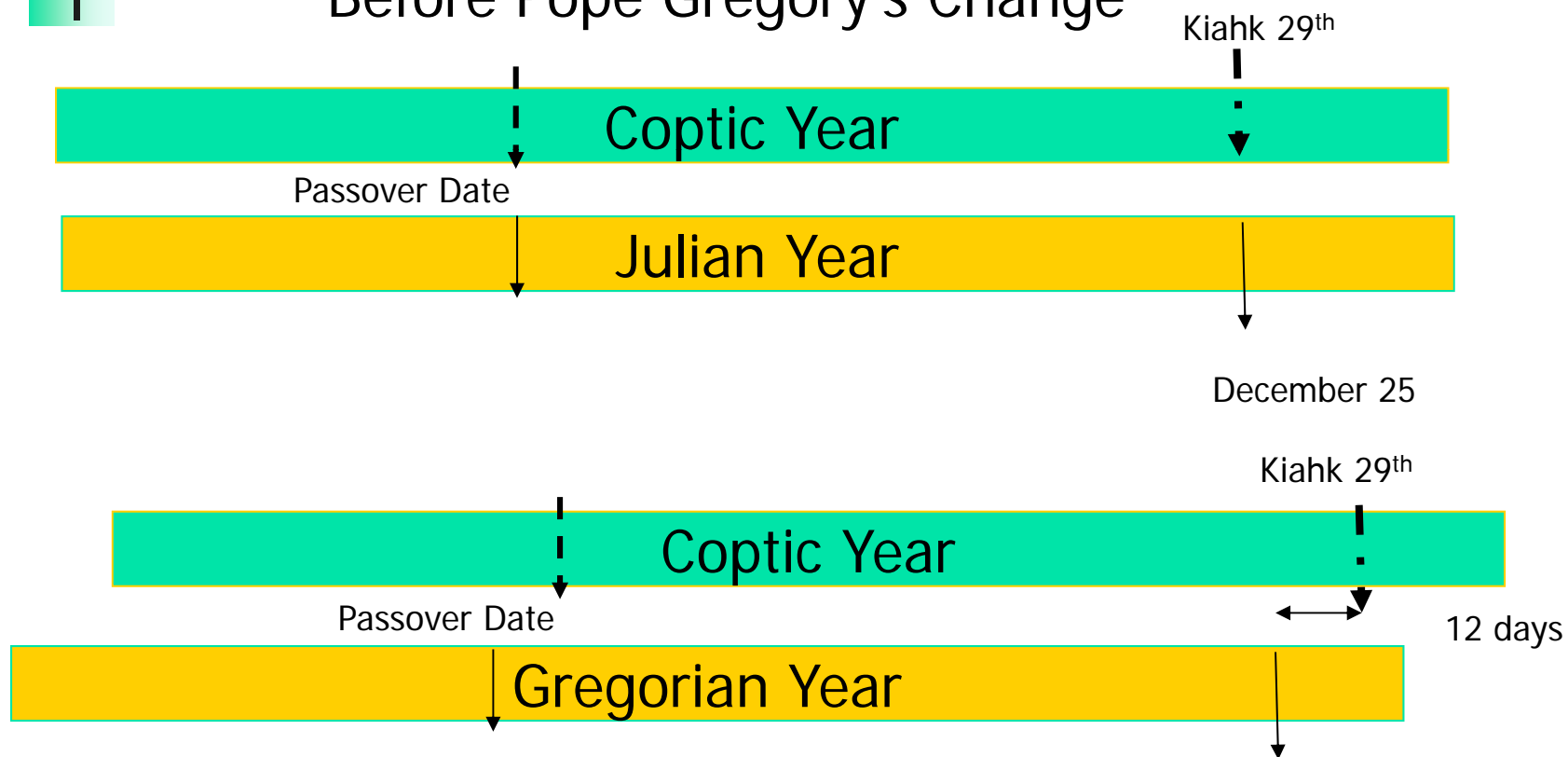
When was it adopted

- Some countries followed the change immediately (1582). Example: Rome, Spain, and France.
- Others took them long to adopt, example England and the US 1752



Impact on Feast dates

Before Pope Gregory's Change



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December 25



Lunar Calendar

- Lunar month is usually 28-29 days.
- Lunar year is 11 days shorter than the Solar year
- Some calendars adjust for this difference to keep dates the same, others do not (Lunisolar Calendars).
- Jewish Calendar compensates multiple times over a 19 year period.



Date for Easter

- Date for Western Easter is based on the Gregorian Calendar
- Date for Orthodox Easter is linked to the Jewish Passover
- Jewish Passover changes time every year (based on the Jewish Lunar Calendar).
- It gets corrected (they add a month) every 3 years



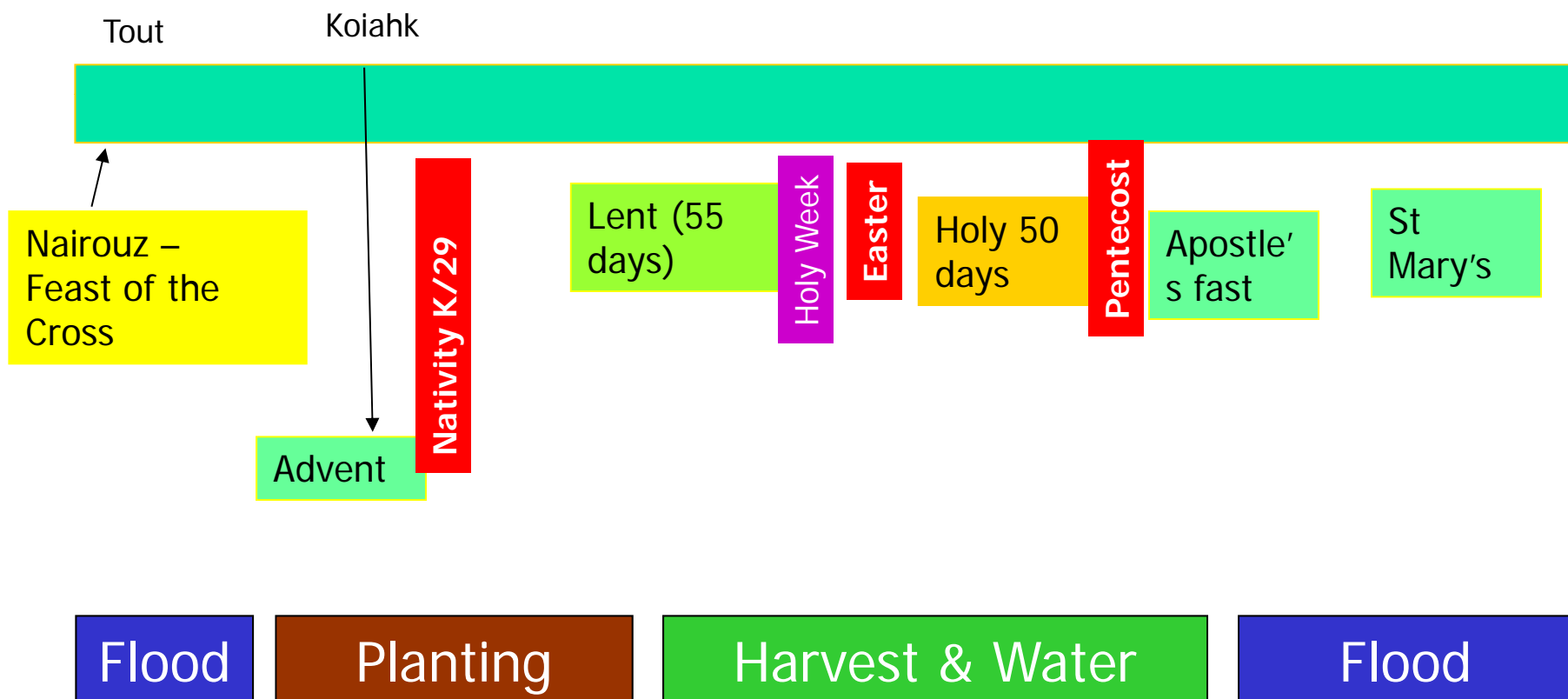
Church Seasons

- Nairouz – Feast of Cross
- Advent (Koiahk)
- Lent
- Easter
- Great 50 days
- Pentecost
- Apostles Fast
- St. Mary's Fast



Seasons in the Church

Coptic Year



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Readings

- Specific Seasons have their own readings
- These are: Advent, Lent, and Holy 50 days (Separate Katamaros)
- Each month has its own theme, reflected in the Sundays readings



Regular months

- Sundays of every months follow a theme
- Weekdays follow the synexarium reading
 - Martyrs, Patriarchs, Female Saints, Prophets,..
- There are fixed feasts for every months (example 29th of every month the church celebrates the feasts of Annunciation, Nativity, and Resurrection except Tooba and Amsheer)



Example, month of Tut

- First month of the year, calls for repentance and the knowledge of God. those who will repent their eyes will be opened.



Tut Sunday's reading

1. John the baptist is greatest among those who are born of women
2. The Lord rejoices by the victory of the disciples and declares no one knows the Father except through the Son.
3. The Story of Zacchaeus, the true life of repentance
4. The woman that wiped Christ's feet with her tears



The Reading of a single day

- 9 Readings from the Bible
 - Vespers (Psalm and Gospel)
 - Matins (Psalm and Gospel)
 - Pauline Epistle
 - Catholic Epistle
 - Praxis (Acts of the Apostles)
 - Synexarium (continuation of the Church)
 - Psalm and Gospel reading



One thought

- All these readings are tied together.
- They are there to present one idea to the reader/listener that is stressed in the Gospel of the Liturgy



Example 3rd Sunday of Tubah

- First week after Epiphany
- To show the importance of Baptism and to show Christ's greatness compared to John the Baptist



Vespers

- Psalm 77:18-19: Christ is the Light
- Gospel: John 5:1-18: Christ's power to heal the man paralyzed for 38 years from next to the well



Matins

- Psalms 97:6, 4: Christ is the light of the world
- Gospel John 3:1-21: Meeting with Nicodemus and talking about the baptism



Readings of the Liturgy

- Psalms 97:6, 4: Christ is the light of the world
- Gospel John 3:1-21: Meeting with Nicodemus and talking about the baptism
- Hebrews 10:19-39
22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- 1 John 4:11-21 The fruits of the Holy Spirit is Love
- Acts 2:38-45 38
Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.



Gospel

- Psalms 66:12, 8: 12 We went through fire and through water;
- John 3:22-36
- 22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.



Lent

- Every week in lent has a theme
- All the weeks of lent have a theme that ties all of them together



Conclusion

- Our Church is very rich in its History and rites
- Everything in the Church have a meaning and a reason. Our job is to find it.
- We are the most Bible based Church in the world