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CHRISTIAN LENT: March 6, 2019 – April 18, 2019¹

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Col 3:2 (KJV)

Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. However, the six Sundays within the period are not fast days (Sundays are always feast days in the Christian calendar) and therefore not counted in the 40 days of Lent. The liturgical period of Lent also ends on the evening of Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday).

By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities.

Whereas Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross, Lent recalls the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion by Rome. This is believed to have taken place in Roman occupied Jerusalem.

The Christian churches that observe Lent in the 21st century (and not all do significantly) use it as a time for prayer and penance. Only a small number of people, today, fast for the entire period of Lent; although some maintain the practice on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is more common these days for believers to surrender a particular vice such as favourite foods or smoking. Regardless of the sacrifice, it is a reflection of Jesus' deprivation in the wilderness and a test of self-discipline.

¹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent_1.shtml

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

