

Being Greek 101 Segment: Ancient Culture & Tradition

Topic: What is the *Epiphany*?

Every year from mid-December to mid-January I get asked why Greeks have their own Christmas.

Ever heard the “12 Days of Christmas” song? Probably!

Did you know that it’s actually a song about the Epiphany! Probably not....

Traditionally, *Epiphany* is a time of revelation that starts with the wonderous story of the birth of Christ in a humble manger on a long, dark, cold night in ancient times, with none of the domestic comforts we enjoy today. There are several stories and songs through which elements of this auspicious moment in time is passed down to us today.

The twelve days that follow are days of celebration ending with the coming of the three kings bearing the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh to pay their respects to the new infant-king. Celebrations for the season conclude on January 6th (popularly known as *The Epiphany* or *Three Kings Day*) and the following day, January 7th, is the celebration of Little Christmas (or Old Christmas on the Orthodox Calendar since it was the day that Christmas was originally celebrated by Eastern Christian communities).

The coming of a new “philosopher king” born under an auspicious star, and all the stories preserved over time are conceptually and culturally appealing to many cultures across the world regardless of their religious following. In truth, discussions relating to astrology as well as sociological discussions about the benefits of a true Philosopher King who puts the good of the people before the good of the self actually hail back to ancient Greece and India.

There is a great little article about the holiday season from our friends at the *Greek Insider*. To read the article, [click here](#).

Wishing you all a warm and blessed *Epiphania*!