

The Roman emperor Constantine, three centuries after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, said he had a vision of the sun superimposed with the cross of Christ, leading him to victory in battle, and so, he instituted the Edict of Toleration in 313 A. D. for the Roman empire which he ruled, declaring the equality of all religions, including Christianity, having been harshly persecuted for three hundred years previously. And in declaring Christianity's equality with other religions began the practice of celebrating Christ's birth, but not at the time of year when Jesus was actually born, during Rosh Hashana, the Feast of Trumpets, the Jewish New Year, which falls at different times in September (when the flocks come down out of the mountains in Israel), because it's based on the lunar (not solar) cycle, but Constantine chose the winter solstice, the pagan new year for the sun worshippers, Constantine having selected December 25 because it was the beginning of the week of celebrations of the rites of Mithra, the sun god of Persia.

Constantine the Great was a Roman emperor who reigned from A.D. 306 to 337. Tradition has it that on his way to an important battle in A.D. 312, a vision of a flaming cross appeared to him with the inscription, "In this sign conquer." He therefore authorized his mostly pagan soldiers to place a cross on their shields, and went on to win the battle. Believing the Christian God to be his secret to military success and the key to uniting his empire, Constantine adopted Christianity as the official religion of Rome in A.D. 324. His life continued to be marred by bloodshed and political intrigue until his death, but through his influence the bishops of Rome gained rapid ascendancy to political and temporal power.

### **Sun Worship**

The real secret of Constantine and the bishops of Rome is their cunning introduction of sun worship and paganism into Christianity. It was done so shrewdly that, incredibly, it has been veiled within the faith for centuries. Through Constantine, paganism and Christianity joined hands in the Roman Empire.

History readily records that Constantine was a sun-worshiper. In one decree he declared, "On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed" (March 7, 321). He made this decree in honor of the sun after his supposed conversion to Christianity! Constantine, even after his "conversion," remained a pagan.

Constantine sought to unite his kingdom's pagan and Christian worshipers, in order to promote stability and ensure that his empire lasted. The easiest way to bring harmony would be to blend sun worship and Christianity. History shows that the Church of Rome did not object; indeed, it had been engaging in the practice for nearly two centuries!

The bishops at Rome also claimed Peter as the head of the church, instead of Christ (Ephesians 4:15). Developing a non-biblical doctrine of "apostolic succession," they claimed that the authority conferred on Peter was transferred to themselves. The "Saint Peter" that was created was actually a combination of pagan idolatry and Christian veneration. Even today, the statue in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome includes a solar disk above his head. Tradition has it that this was actually a statue of Jupiter taken from a pagan temple and simply renamed "St. Peter"! Sun worship, which appears in nearly every pagan religion in the world, soon appeared in Christian art, imagery, and theology. The **halo** often seen on Christ and Mary is actually a symbol of sun worship. Madonna ("Mary") was depicted holding sun disks.

One of the earliest entrances of sun worship into the church was through the spring pagan festival. The festival was celebrated in honor of Eostre (according to the eighth century cleric Bede). The festival often honored a goddess (such as Ishtar), and one of the more popular tales of this time concerned the god Attis, who was said to be resurrected each year during the month of March. According to one tradition, the festival of Attis began as "a day of blood on a black Friday and culminated after three days in a day of rejoicing over a resurrection."<sup>3</sup> These spring festivals eventually became the Christian festival of Easter, complete with eggs and rabbits, both ancient pagan symbols of fertility.

At the Council of Nicaea, Constantine also persuaded those in attendance that only one Easter "Resurrection" day should be kept. "Our Savior has left us only one festal day ... and he desired to establish only one Catholic Church," he argued. Then he added this significant statement. "You should consider ... that we should have nothing in common with the Jews."<sup>4</sup>

Constantine felt that the Jews were "murderers of the Lord," and therefore desired to blot out any links between Christianity and Judaism. For this reason he persuaded the Christian church to drop the ancient biblical Sabbath, given at Creation, and replace it with Sunday worship. "The Church made a sacred day of Sunday ... largely because it was the weekly festival of the sun; for it was a definite Christian policy to take over the pagan festivals endeared to the people by tradition, and to give them a Christian significance."<sup>5</sup> Pope Sylvester I (314–335) finally made Christian Sunday keeping official by decreeing that "the rest of the Sabbath should be transferred to the Lord's day [Sunday]."<sup>6</sup> Perhaps this was Constantine and Rome's crowning conspiratorial victory—sneaking sun worship into Christianity by exchanging the true Christian day of worship for the day dedicated to ancient sun worship.