

Why "Sun-day" is So Appealing to Satan

Honoring the seventh-day Sabbath was a *distinguishing trait* of God's people from Adam on. Even before the fearful grandeur of Sinai when the law was written in stone, came the reminder of the sacredness of that day through the manna miracles. God later announced that the seventh day was His *sign (owth)* – a standard, a beacon, His monument of truth that He would partner with man through an everlasting covenant. In keeping that Sabbath they were reminded that He is the one who restores, cleanses and makes them holy (Exodus 31:13). That day is to bring to mind – as a Sabbath exercise – that He is the *Creator God* (Exodus 20:12) and the Deliverer from sin and bondage (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). It is also set-aside time to honor God's authority.

Therefore, there is nothing so unique for Satan to attack. Ever since the war in heaven where he, the dragon, tried to assume God's power and authority (Revelation 12:7-8), he has coveted the kind of homage the Sabbath should bring to God! Isaiah gave a little window into that devilish mind when he revealed the continued passion of his heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ... I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14).

If he can get God's people to dishonor the Sabbath, he will have assumed authority over them by default. If he gets mankind to honor a false Sabbath, approbation is given to him. If he can get the world, the wicked, the apostates to force God's loyal people to honor a false Sabbath, he becomes the oppressor.

Satan's "Sabbath" Emerges from Paganism

Sun worship became the earliest form of recorded corporate idolatry.^[1] The ancients appear to have worshiped the sun directly without using any statue or symbol along with the moon (Job 31:26-27). *Ra* was the sun god of Egypt, *Baal* of the Phoenicians, *Molech* of the Ammonites, *Ha-dad* of the Syrians, *Apollo* of the Greeks and *Mithra* of the Persians and Indians.

Though the seventh-day Sabbath was riveted as sacred and a covenant sign of restoration to the Hebrew people, even they were strangely influenced by those pagan practices (Leviticus 26:30, Isaiah 17:8). King Manasseh engaged in direct sun worship (II Kings 21:3, 5). Sun altars were built on the housetops where incense was burned (Zephaniah 1:5). When Josiah came to the throne, he destroyed chariots that were dedicated to the sun and removed horses that were used in sun worship processions (II Kings 23:5, 11-12). When Daniel was in Babylon, the sun-god *Shamash* was worshiped [this record was found on Babylonian tablets now in the British Museum describing "the restoration of the sun-god's image and temple."^[2] In Hebrew the word *Shemesh* meant "sun."

When Daniel implicated a little horn who would "think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25), he prophesied that yet another apostate power, in great sympathy with Satan, would be at work to undermine God's holy days. The first historical record of its fulfillment related to Antiochus Epiphanes IV, a Seleucid or Syrian emperor (ruled 175–164 B.C.). Beside the Jewish people breaking their own Sabbaths and decreed feasts and enforcing idol worship, the historical information regarding Antiochus is the first civil joiner against God's holy days.

The writings of Maccabees records that story. Though much of the Maccabean works are at variance to Christian theology, they have linguistic insight, explanation into the religious meaning of ancient phrases and important historical information. In I Maccabean 1:45 it is noted that the decree of Antiochus Epiphanes IV required the Jews “to profane the sabbaths and feasts.” In II Maccabean 6:6 it is noted that Jews “could neither keep the sabbath nor observe the feasts of his fathers” but had to participate in pagan sacrifices and celebrate heathen festivals.^[3] These works influenced the Jewish leaders prior to the first advent and now the Christian world just prior to the second advent. The Septuagint even included those books within its Old Testament Greek translation, considering them sacred canon.

Mithra Worship Adversely Influences Christianity

Fiendish destruction of Sabbath sacredness was well matured by the first advent. Mithra had become the sun god of the Roman soldiers. As the new Christian faith spread, it was in direct competition with sun worship throughout the Roman Empire. That emerging loyalty to the cross of the Messiah grew out of the precincts of Judaism and retained one very unique gift – the Sabbath – from that ancient theocracy. Thus, as the new church expanded, bringing its wonderful gospel to all the then known world, that Sabbath was to remain *God's covenant sign* and the day He received special honor.

Satan had been the “light bearer” in heaven and now he wanted that church to worship his chosen “light”. His deceptive plans began to influence first religious then secular leaders.

After the Cross, there were two major Jewish uprisings against Roman oppression. The first preceded 70 A.D. The second was between 132-135 A.D. God had pronounced a curse on that people (Matthew 21:43), and His sacred relationship to them ended shortly before the Cross (Matthew 23:37-38). He used the Roman Empire to help finalize His judgment predictions against that nation, just as He used Babylon to bring them into captivity for breaking one of His Sabbaths. Satan used this as a stunning opportunity to forward his worship of “light”. Watch what happened! How did the Romans specifically aim their vengeance against that rebellious people? In 70 A.D. it was against *people* and their *assets*. In 135 A.D. it was against *people* and their particular *day of worship* – the most “Jewish” practice – Sabbath worship. Anti-Semitism was first expressed through anti sabbatarianism.

By 135 A.D. the “Epistle of Barnabas” repudiated Judaism as the true religion. It influenced many Christians to adapt Sunday as its worship day by calling it the “Lord’s Day.” Mithra had been called “Lord.” Sun-day was now referred to as the “Lord’s Day.” Anti-Semitism began to infiltrate the prejudices of the Roman world. Examples of ensuing persecution are protean.

Christ was born during the era of Rome’s dominion over its vast empire. The sun-god Mithra of Indian and Persian origin had also entered Europe and Asia Minor after Alexander’s conquest (though he personally adopted the worship of and later claimed to be a *ram deity* associated with the Egyptian god Amman). Mithraism had become a compelling force even in the daily life of Roman citizens. It involved many mysteries, including seven degrees that men could climb upward through. Its believer accepted the immortality of the soul and sinners were consigned to hell when they died. This would later give rise to the belief in purgatory. Its cultish center was eventually located in Rome, as was, gradually Christianity.

By the beginning of the first century Mithra worship had become the largest sun-worshipping cult in the world. During the next two centuries, it evolved into the largest pagan religion. It clearly was a rival to Christianity. The Romans called this god “Sol Invictus” – “the invincible sun.” By 250 A.D. Emperor Valerian established a college to train sun priests in Rome. His coins bore the legend “Sol, Dominus Imperil Romani” – *the sun-god of Imperial Rome*.

Temples to Mithra were erected. The emperor Aurelian (270-275 A.D.) built one such Roman temple. Its priests were called *pontiffs*. It was he that formalized December 25 as an official holiday for the empire honoring Mithra’s birthday (later to become the day to celebrate the birthday of the Christ child.) The worship of the sun was associated with the first day of the week. Anti-Semitic Christians (first emerged in Alexandria, Egypt and Rome) began to adopt that day as their “Day of the Lord.”

Women helpers in the Mithrian religion were chosen as virgins. They would later be emulated as nuns in the Roman Catholic Church. Roman emperors were depicted as having sun bursts around their heads within the two centuries after Christ.^[4] Christian art began to adopt a “halo” on “saints,” babies and church leaders. That became a sign of “special light” “holiness.” Satan’s plan appears to be succeeding. Hate the Jews, hate their Sabbath, honor what has been so accepted by the populace over the centuries.

Christianity and State Begin to Cooperate

Constantine decreed all persecution of Christians should cease (313 A.D.) in the Edict of Milan. That ended over 200 years of terrible atrocities against God’s people. But – for the little remnant fully committed to truth, it was only a short reprieve.

By 316 A.D. the bishop of Rome, Sylvester I, gave an ecclesiastical command that the “rest” of the seventh day Sabbath should be transferred to the “Lord’s Day.”^[5] He encouraged the Roman Empire to call Sunday the First Feriae (celebration) as the “Lord’s Day.”^[6] This was a decisive transition in Christian history reviewed by Rabanus Maurus, a German theologian and archbishop (776-856) of Mainz, Germany.^[7] The Roman Christian church now institutes ecclesiastical law for its members.

Silvester stated in that canon law: “Every Sabbath on account of the burial (of Jesus) is to be regarded in execration (denunciation) of the Jews ... In fact it is not proper to observe, because of Jewish customs, the consumption of food and the ceremonies of the Jews.”^[8]

Sylvester influenced Constantine to issue the decree, *Dies Solis*, of March 7, 321 A.D. as a Roman day of rest (Sunday).

“On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits because it often happens that another day is not suitable for grain-sowing or vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.”

Though Constantine sympathized with Christianity, his bitterness against the Jews was profound. This was exhibited in several decrees against the seventh-day Sabbath. In turn, however, it also provided oppression of those who were adherents to the pure faith of the

Biblical Sabbath. That hatred actually began shortly after 313 A.D. with the Edict of Milan. Repressive laws were instituted in 315 A.D., even against Jewish proselytism, which became punishable by death.[\[9\]](#)

Overnight apostate Christianity was given state sanction. The pure gospel of love and reclamation was sadly replaced by aggressive liturgy. This was partly due to Constantine's continued allegiance to Mithraism and the growing adoption by Christianity of pagan icons and rites. In the same year, 321 A.D., he embellished a temple to the sun in Rome. He made many subsequent laws in support of heathen priests, priestesses and their role in the empire. Sunday observance became universal law. It is important to continue to note that it was sympathetic to Christianity *and* to paganism.

Victor Duruy, a French historian, tells us more about this: "He [Constantine] sent to the [military] legions, to be recited upon that day [Sunday] a form of prayer which could have been employed by a worshiper of Mithra, of Serapis, or of Apollo, quite as well as by [an apostate] ... Christian believer. This was the official sanction of the old custom of addressing a prayer to the rising sun."[\[10\]](#)

Commenting on this heaven-daring change, expositor White wrote: "Not a single testimony of the Scriptures was produced in proof of the new doctrine. Eusebius himself unwittingly acknowledges its falsity, and points to the real authors of the change.... But the Sunday argument, groundless as it was, served to embolden men in trampling upon the Sabbath of the Lord. All who desired to be honored by the world accepted the popular festival."[\[11\]](#)

A contemporary of Emperor Constantine and Pope Sylvester I, was this Eusebius Pamphili (260-341 A.D.), Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine. About 330 A.D. he wrote: "and all things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day, as more appropriately belonging to it, because it has precedence, and is first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath."[\[12\]](#)

"This was the beginning of something new and ominous for the Church. Sylvester [I] (314-337) was the 'pope' during the reign of Constantine. His attitude toward the Bible Sabbath, which God gave to mankind at the Creation of this world is shown in the following quotation: 'If every Sunday is to be observed joyfully by the Christians on account of the resurrection, then every Sabbath on account of the burial is to be regarded in execration [loathing or cursing] of the Jews.'[\[13\]](#)

Later a Council of Laodicea (364 A.D.) (a local council but with far-reaching influence) voted: "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, the Sabbath, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day (Sunday) they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ."[\[14\]](#)

The Apostate Christian Church Is Born

Constantine, now calling himself Pontus Maximus, called the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. to formulate the basis for the "emerging" Christian church [for the "redefined" Christian church]. During this council of 318 individuals (number varies by historians), the Nicene Creed, used by many churches today, was hammered out. Constantine was present only as a witness and an

apparent referee. Arianism was rejected but later personally accepted by Constantine because of spousal pressure. The attendees were from all over the Roman Empire except Britain. Many consider this the first general council of the church since the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem. Some contemporary records suggest that this is when the Bible was put together. That, however, is inaccurate. The agenda was published and did not include that issue. The Canon had already been established.[\[15\]](#)

This set the stage for formalizing the apostate Christian church, which would become the Roman Catholic Church. Later (364 A.D.), at the Laodicean Council noted above (a local council of 30 plus members), Canon 29 made the Sabbath rest an ecclesiastical sin.

The Christian leaders of Alexandria and later of Rome had already been exercising power over the Christian churches of the empire, including adapting to Sunday worship. With Constantine's influence and his decrees, Christianity was secularized, paganized and became a tainted blend of ancient rites associated with Christian claims.

By the middle of the fourth century the apostate Church of Rome had endorsed and made Sunday worship a liturgical requirement – Sylvester I, its chief historical arbiter. Constantine had made Sunday a user friendly day with anti-Semitic overtones. Sunday rest became mandated with the force of law. But what that “rest” meant was still undefined. Mithraism remained a cherished cult, even by Constantine. His worship of the sun continued. There remained Mithraism with its sun worship and Christianity with its Sunday worship competitively vying for time and space.

The bishops of Rome were anxious to control all religious activity of the empire. Their craving for power and authority rapidly grew. With Satanic fervor they questioned how they might accomplish that? Could there be a way to *combine* Mithraism and Christianity? Satan's success to draw men away from the true Sabbath, the covenant day of rest, was already succeeding too well. Something had to happen to Mithraism to centralize power within the Christian church. If it could do that, the church's purposes would be complete. Then authority due God would be focused on Rome and their “ecclesiastical” leadership!

Sharpening the craving for power was the growing *competition* between heads of the churches of Constantinople (where Constantine had moved the Roman Empire's capital), with Rome and Alexandria of Egypt (North Africa). Various local church councils had struggled, trying to establish what Christianity should stand for and assume centralized power. Arianism, which still had a stronghold, especially in Constantinople, continued to influence civil leaders.

The break came in February, 380 A.D. when Roman Empire Emperor Flavius Theodosius from the capital at Constantinople called another church council. Many interesting religious mandates came from those meetings.

1. The Holy Spirit was reaffirmed as a part of the Godhead and defined as one of the *mysteries* in the Nicene Creed.
2. Paganism was outlawed. That civil decree became the break the church leaders desired. The “competition” for the religious interest of the citizenry came to an abrupt end – Destruction of their temples, persecution of believers and martyrdom of priests began.

3. Arianism was no longer accepted. Their churches were confiscated and violence against its leaders started.
4. Sunday laws were matured and exceeded compulsory observance greater than any prior mandates and decrees.

In his “Codex Theodosianus 11.7.13”, this “Christian” Emperor decreed the *mandatory observance* of the first day of the week as the Lord’s day.

“Let the course of all law suits and all business cease on Sunday, which our fathers have rightly called the Lord's day, and let no one try to collect either a public or a private debt; and let there be no hearing of disputes by any judges either those required to serve by law or those voluntarily chosen by disputants. And he is to be held not only infamous but sacrilegious who has turned away from the service and observance of holy religion on that day.”^[16]

“On the following occasions all amusements of the theaters and the circuses shall be denied throughout all cities to the people thereof, and the minds of Christians and of the faithful shall be wholly occupied in the worship of God: namely, on the Lord’s day, which is the first day of the whole week, on the Natal Day and Epiphany of Christ, and on the day of Easter and of Pentecost, as long as the vestments that imitate the light of the celestial font attest to the new light of holy baptism; at the time also when the commemoration of the Apostolic Passion, the teacher of all Christianity, is duly celebrated by everyone.’ (Law of Theodosius II, Feb. 1, 425, in THEODOSIAN CODE 15.5.5, p. 433. Copyright 1952 by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.)”^[17]

This became a time many Christians began to keep Saturday and Sunday both as sacred times to cover religious and state requirements.

Apostate Christianity Now Comes to Its Most Significant Transition in History.

1. Christianity and paganism had shared time and some space.
2. Now Sunday became a day of Christian worship only.
3. “Paganism” is now outlawed. Arianism is prohibited.
4. But – pagan practices and icons are adapted into the Christian church making it appealing to the “pagan” masses.
5. Sunday worship is enforced.

Over a 40–50 year period the last vestiges of formal Mithraism vanished. BUT:

1. Mithra’s birthday or December 25 had already become the birthday for Jesus.
2. Icons and images that pagans held in veneration were reinterpreted as a Christian symbols and filled the liturgical life of “Christians”.
3. Other pagan holidays became significant Christian dates: (ie the Resurrection – Passover – Easter – Spring equinox – was celebrated with honor to the rising sun in the east).
4. Mithra had said: “He who will not eat of my body, nor drink of my blood, so that he may be one with me shall not be saved.” This was associated with an animal sacrifice. The church now uses the eucharist and common wine cup as a celebration of “the sacrifice.” Mithras rites and symbols were now adopted into the body and blood of Christ.

5. The sun became a central icon of the Christian faith by calling it the “sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2). From that point on images had sunburst, haloes and sun pictures were embedded in windows, paintings and on priestly garments.
6. “The Church ... christened pagan festivals, making use of dates and ceremonies, and endowing them with an entirely new and Christian significance”[\[18\]](#)

Cardinal Newman (1809-1890) gave us some amazing and unique insight into this in 1845 in one of his monumental works, *Development of the Christian Doctrine*: “It is not necessary to go into a subject which the diligence of Protestant writers has made familiar to most of us. The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees; incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; asylums; holydays and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, images at a later date, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, and the Kyrie Eleison [\[Note 17\]](#), are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church.”[\[19\]](#)

He went on to clarify the historical justification for this: “It is but enunciating in other words the principle we are tracing, to say that the Church has been entrusted with the dispensation of grace. For if she can convert heathen appointments into spiritual rites and usages, what is this but to be in possession of a treasure, and to exercise a discretionary power in its application?”

Satan Has Gotten His Way – For Now

The distinguishing “mark” of the Jewish people and later the emerging Christian church was legally and ecclesiastically challenged and then “changed”. The empire and the church, however, did not represent God. That church claimed, as they do today, to be God’s representatives. But, they aren’t. They are promoting allegiance to the ancient god’s of the sun, especially Mithra.

Of Lucifer it is noted: “Lucifer, ‘son of the morning,’ was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him” “coveting a higher state, forfeited forever the brightness and bliss of heaven”[\[20\]](#) “He had “glory surpassing all the angels that surround the throne, and united in closest ties to the Son of God.” He was a “shining seraph.”[\[21\]](#) Lucifer was associated with “light.”

Notice the many descriptive phrases related to light:

- “Son of the morning” (Isaiah 14:12) – “light bearer” (Like the “sun” that rises in the east in the early morning)
- He lived in beams of light, glory and brightness
- He was so brilliant and aglow himself that he was called “bright.”

As rebellion commenced its baneful work in Lucifer’s heart, he began to “glory in his brightness” and his exalted position.[\[22\]](#) Later, we are told “he wanted to be like God” (Isaiah 14:12-15). Lucifer and his host were cast from the precincts of heaven (Revelation 12:7, 9). It was then that he began to lay satanic strategy to be honored like God, wield authority over this world and continue as the “light bearer.”

His first deception related to the penalty for sin – death. His next related to what man worshiped. Why not get man to worship “light?” As recorded history testifies, sun worship was man’s earliest cult. This drew men’s attention away from the “sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2). By worshiping the visible earthly light, man rejected the divine mystery of the invisible light – Jehovah.

By worshiping God/god on the first day instead of the last or seventh day, it removed God’s authority, giving it to man/Satan. That is exactly what he wanted.

- The concept of hell and purgatory (man doesn’t die) appealed to man’s works of righteousness. [do more and you won’t go to hell or be in hell long].
- The idea of the law being nailed to the Cross trivialized the foundational principle of God’s kingdom [his very character].
- The false Sabbath demeaned the restoration of man [What God said it would represent after sin came into earth’s precincts].

Heaven’s distinguishing “mark” would remain the seventh-day Sabbath. God’s authority, His right of ownership because of creatorship, and the imagery of “setting apart” were all choreographed in that day in the Christian church.

By redirecting men’s attention to the sun – in Sunday – by deceptively claiming that the resurrection is what needs to be honored, Satan has successfully redefined the whole plan of salvation on false terms. The sign of God’s authority, ownership and peculiarity of His people has vanished with worship on that first day.

The Cross and its blood were to remain the cleansing and regenerating agent. The resurrection sweeps that away giving focus to “life” before “blood”. The Sabbath, restoration and the blood must be intertwined with *man’s need* to bear a cross. Sin is to be sacrificed and washed away by the Cross/blood of Jesus. The Seventh-day is to remain man’s time to rest from labor and reflect on what “cleansing blood” provides making then “life” possible.

The icon of Satan’s “theocracy” – the Roman Catholic Church – has made the sun its icon of “light”. Satan has succeeded in changing his once elevated glory and light into his idol of light, the sun.

Lucifer: Light from God’s glory → Satan: Light from sun’s glory

That is why at the end of time the issue of the “sun” will once again be of paramount importance. That will be Satan’s last opportunity to detract from the “light of God’s truth”. The Seventh-day Sabbath vs Sunday worship will rise to competitive conflict. It will, however, be more than over a “day.” It will be between God and Satan. It will be between God’s “sign” and Satan’s “mark.”

The prophetic introduction to this apocalyptic issue begins in the Old Testament with Ezekiel 1–11. In stunning imagery God reveals that icons, images and “sun” worship will eventually lead to turning one’s back on God’s church. Honoring the resurrection honors the “rising sun” and demeans the Cross, which Paul so eloquently appealed to: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14). Paul never said: “God forbid that I should

glory, save in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” [!] The Sabbath is to uphold the true redemptive theme, the cross of Jesus. Sunday diminishes the vast issues of the atonement.

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