

The Emperor Constantine the Great – a villain or a hero, or something in-between?

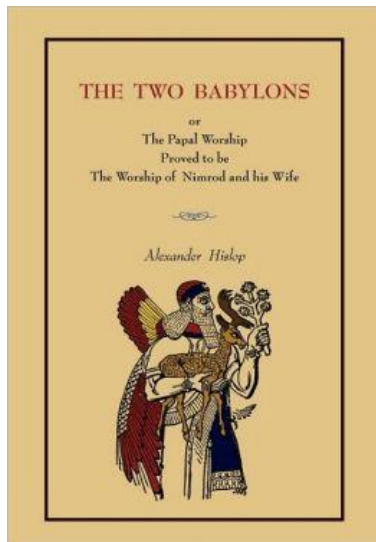
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To many, the Emperor Constantine was a saint: in the Orthodox church he is one of the “Equal-to-Apostles” (*isapóstolos*) a title given to people (such as Patrick, Cyril the evangelist of Russia and others) who were especially effective in establishing the gospel.

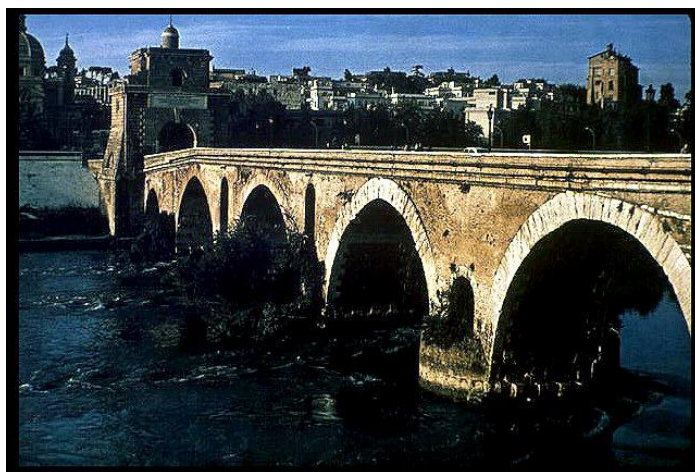


To others, Constantine is Great was a tool of evil, a corrupter of the church.

The attacks against Constantine come from various quarters. Some Messianic believers imagine that he turned the church into a Gentile movement. Others charge him with introducing pagan practices into the church. Seventh-Day Adventists credit him (or some pope) with changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.¹ Jehovah’s Witnesses think he turned Jesus into God, made the cross a symbol of Christianity, and established Easter and Christmas. All of these parties tend to gang up and use the same materials as the basis for their attacks – for example, many anti-Constantine groups hark back to the *Babylon Mystery Religion – Ancient and Modern*, by Ralph Woodrow (1966). And they and Woodrow borrowed much of their “information” from Alexander Hislop’s *The Two Babylons* (1858), another sketchy attempt to connect Catholicism with Babylonian religion.² More on this later.



Who was Constantine? To make a long story short, he became emperor through a confused series of inheritance squabbles and military battles. Today we think of a son succeeding his father as king, but that wasn't the Roman law. When his father died, Constantine was recognized by some to be the new emperor of the western half of the Roman Empire. His rival for that claim was Maxentius, and in 312 Constantine marched on Rome to oust him. *En route* he supposedly had a vision of a cross and the Greek words "in this sign conquer" and later a dream of Christ. He had his troops mark their shields with the Christian symbol Chi-Rho, which symbolized both the cross and the first two letters of "Christos". He fought Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, which led into the capital. The forces of Maxentius were forced backwards, into the Tiber River, and he himself drowned while escaping. Constantine became the emperor of the West. In 324 he defeated the eastern emperor Licinius and took control of the whole empire. He came to support the church and viewed his reign as a victory for Christ; yet his own faith experience is unclear.



1 Showdown at the Milvian Bridge, Rome

Rumors about Constantine: TRUE or FALSE?

1. Constantine with the first Christian Roman emperor

True...but possibly False

Our primary source for his story is *Life of Constantine*,³ written by his fervent admirer Eusebius, better known for his *History of the Church*.⁴ *Life* presents the war between Constantine and Licinius in religious terms, Christianity *versus* paganism. It was written in order to place Constantine in the best possible light and therefore glosses over many negative things that he could have reported.

Eusebius, and church legend, tell us that the conversion of Constantine was immediate, profound, and unfluctuating. This narrative leaves out Constantine's many sins, including the execution of his nephew and his own son. Rather, his conversion seems to have advanced by stages.⁵ As often happens, coins of the period tell their own story: Christian themes only began to appear on Constantine's coins after another full decade.⁶ Here is a coin that commemorates Constantine on the front (obverse) and the so-called *Soli Invicto Comiti* (the pagan symbol of the "unconquerable sun" on the reverse).



Another stroke against Constantine was that he waited to be baptized on his death-bed, in the year 337. This may indicate a reluctance to convert fully, although it may also mean that like many others of that time, he wanted to be "cleansed" of his sins at the last possible moment before facing God.

On the other hand, his mother Helena had converted to Christ in 310, and he knew of the gospel. He fully and enthusiastically supported the church, putting up buildings and helping – or intruding – in church disputes. He put out many decrees that showed a clear reverence for God and Christ.

My take is that Constantine was hardly a fake Christian, but neither was his conversion as exemplary. Perhaps he is like the modern politician, who has a sincere faith in Christ, who emphasizes that faith in order to curry favor with voters, but who falls short of being the model of consistent Christian thought and action.

2. Constantine became a Christian in order to go along with the majority belief of his subjects

False

A common myth is that Constantine saw the writing on the wall, and realized that he could maintain power only if he favored the Christians, who were now in the majority. The great church historian Philip Schaff wrote, “He was distinguished by that genuine political wisdom, which, putting itself at the head of the age, clearly saw that idolatry had outlived itself in the Roman Empire, and that Christianity alone could breathe new vigor into it and furnish its moral support.”⁷

We concede that Constantine might have had some ulterior motive for converting; nevertheless it wasn't in order to please the majority. A small minority of the empire was Christian – some say 5%, but it was almost certainly under 10%. And these people were persecuted and marginalized, so hardly a political power bloc. Whatever his motives for turning to Christianity, being an opportunist is unlikely to have been his motive.

3. Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire

False

In 313 he co-sponsored the Edict of Toleration (aka the Edict of Milan), but we must understand its meaning in terms of Roman law, not of modern constitutional rights. Under the American constitution, for example, the First Amendment states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” This means on the one hand that there is no state religion, and that all are free to practice their faith. But this is a modern concept, with roots only as early as the 17th century. In antiquity the state decided which religions were acceptable. In Rome, a legally-permitted religion (*religio licita*) was allowed to go ahead relatively unimpeded. Judaism became a *religio licita* under Julius Caesar, as recounted by Josephus in *Antiquities of the Jews*.⁸ Any other faith was automatically *religio illicita*, an outlawed religion – that was Christianity's status, but only in the 60s, once it became clear that Christianity was not the same as Judaism. The government might actively persecute the church or not, but the church was always extralegal.

The Edict of Toleration of 313 did not make Christianity the official religion of Rome; it only make it legal, *religio licita*, alongside other religions:

When you see that this has been granted to [Christians] by us, your Worship will know that we have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made that we may not seem to detract from any dignity of any religion.⁹

All confiscated property was returned to Christians, and the emperor supported the church in various ways. Constantine and his successors grew more antagonistic to paganism and more generous – and interventionist – toward the church. Eventually, paganism became *religio illicita*: in 324 Constantine banned them from offering sacrifices to the ancient gods; in the 340s his successor banned all pagan practices.

Still, readers might recall the Augustine of Hippo was born to a Christian mother and a pagan father, and that Augustine was already in his 30s when he converted to Christianity in 387. The law neither forbade him from continuing as he wished, nor did it force him to become a Christian.

It was only in the year 380 that emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the entire empire. From then on, only Christianity was legal, the sole *religio licita*, and step by step the power of the church and state became intermingled. It was only in 17th and 18th century that there arose the concept of a secular state, with all religions counted equal before the law.

4. Constantine interfered in religious matters

True

Once again, we must understand him as a man of his times, not of ours. Constantine did not believe in the separation of religion and state; as a Christian emperor he saw it as his duty to back the truth and, to some extent, suppress untruth.

He banned pagan sacrifices (AD 324); fortune-telling or soothsaying; convened the first ecumenical (“world-wide”) church council, at Nicea (325) and encouraged the churches to follow its decisions. Going further, he banned heretical groups (332). He and his successors were, to our way of thinking, unconscionably *interventionist* – blessing some, exiling, fining, punishing others, and over all urging unity. His motives? One clear goal was to pacify the Roman Empire by eliminating the sharp religious disputes over doctrine. But he also seems to have personally and genuinely favored the doctrine that he affirmed.

5. Constantine forced people to convert to Christianity

Mainly false

He eventually banned the movement called Donatism and forced them to convert to mainstream Christianity. But these people already regarded themselves as Christians.

There is zero evidence that Constantine ever forced non-Christians, whether Jews or pagans, to convert to Christianity. Upon his defeat of Licinius in 324 he proclaimed:

My own desire is, for the common good of the world and the advantage of all mankind, that thy people should enjoy a life of peace and undisturbed concord. Let those, therefore, who still delight in error, be made welcome to the same degree of peace and tranquillity which they have who believe. For it may be that this restoration of equal privileges to all will prevail to lead them into the straight path. *Let no one molest another, but let every one do as his soul desires.* Only let men of sound judgment be assured of this, that those only can live a life of holiness and purity, whom thou callest to a reliance on thy holy laws. With regard to those who will hold themselves aloof from us, let them have, if they please, their temples of lies: we have the glorious edifice of thy truth, which thou hast given us as our native home. We pray, however, that they too may receive the same blessing, and thus experience that heartfelt joy which unity of sentiment inspires.¹⁰

6. Constantine conducted a crusade against Jews

False

Despite the myths that circulate, there is no evidence that he banned Judaism; or closed or burned down synagogues; that he prohibited the learning of Torah; that destroyed Jewish holy sites in Palestine; or that conducted a “pogrom” against Palestinian Jews.¹¹ Even years after Constantine, Jewish synagogues were protected religious buildings and the emperors offered decree after decree to recognize their legitimacy.¹²

He did clearly favor Christianity over Judaism: Jews could convert to Christianity, but he prohibited Jews from trying to convert Christians, and he told them not to hassle Jewish people who converted to Christianity (AD 329).¹³ Jews were not allowed to own Christian slaves.

On the positive side, Constantine gave Jewish religious leaders the same privilege he gave to the Christians – they were exempted from compulsory public service (AD 330-383).

7. Constantine invented the doctrines of the Deity of Christ or the Trinity

False

Dan Brown, in his *Da Vinci Code*, wrote a revisionist history, making Constantine the guy who thought up the idea that Jesus was God, and forcing it down the church's throats at the Nicene Council of 325 –

“Indeed,” Teabing said. “...During this fusion of religions, Constantine needed to strengthen the new Christian tradition, and held a famous ecumenical gathering known as the Council of Nicaea.”...

“At this gathering,” Teabing said, “many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon – the date of Easter, the role of the bishops. The administration of sacraments, and of course, the *divinity* of Jesus.”

[Sophie] “I don't follow. His divinity?” “My dear,” Teabing declared, “until *that* moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet... a great and powerful man, but a *man* nonetheless. A mortal.” “Not the Son of God?” “Right,” Teabing said. “Jesus' establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea.” “Hold on. You're saying Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote?” “A relatively close vote at that,” Teabing added...

Dan Brown is famous for his unawareness of basic history, and he gets it wrong on almost all counts. He supposedly understands Gnosticism, and says that according to the Gnostics, Jesus was just a man. He could not be more wrong. The Gnostics all believed that Jesus was a god or divine being, but were unanimous in saying he was not a man. At Nicea, every single bishop in attendance believed that Jesus was God – their dispute lay in whether he was Eternal God like the Father is God, or a lesser being who is still God. They voted to affirm what most already believed, that Jesus was the Son of God, not created but Eternal. And this was taught by the church fathers up until Nicene as well.¹⁴ Nor was it a “close vote” – not unless you can call 298 to 2 in favor of the eternal Deity of Christ a close call!

The same could be said of the Trinity. The Jehovah's Witnesses claim that he changed the church's doctrine “by imposing the Trinity at the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. He fused apostate Christianity with the pagan Roman cult and made this ‘universal’ or ‘catholic’ form of worship the state religion.”¹⁵ This is easily disproved, given that the term *trinitas* (Trinity, meaning “three-in-one”) had been invented a century and a half before Nicea and the doctrine was generally accepted by the church.¹⁶ Here is but one example of the Trinity from a prayer by the church father Polycarp, uttered around AD 155 –

“For this reason, indeed for all things, I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom to you with him and the Holy Spirit be glory both now and for the ages to come. Amen.”¹⁷

8. Constantine changed the Christian day of worship from Saturday to Sunday

False, mainly

According to one Sabbatarian study:

You see, at that time the cult of Mithraism or sun-worship was the official religion of the Roman Empire. It stood as the greatest competitor to the new Christian religion. It had its own organization, temples, priesthood, robes – everything. It also had an official worship day on which special homage was given to the sun. That day was called “The Venerable Day of the Sun.” It was the first day of the week, and from it we get our name Sunday. When Constantine pressed his pagan hordes into the church they were observing the day of the sun for their adoration of the sun god. It was their special holy day. In order to make it more convenient for them to make the change to the new religion, Constantine accepted their day of worship, Sunday, instead of the Christian Sabbath which had been observed by Jesus and His disciples.¹⁸

Where does one begin with such a statement? First, it is false that Constantine forced pagans to convert to Christianity, as we have shown above. But second, this statement is fundamentally misleading about Sunday. You see, the Romans did not observe a 7-day week; that was brought into the empire by the Jews and later the Christians. Pull over any Roman and ask him, “What day of the week is it?” and he would go all blank. “Well – it’s the second day of June, if that is any help.” Some Greeks used 7-day weeks but only for astrological purposes – Saturday is derived from Saturn’s Day, Sunday from the Sun, Monday from the Moon, etc. In general, only a Jew or a Christian would speak of the first or seventh day, or even of the concept of a seven-day week. The pagans did not “go to church on Sunday.”

But what is worse for this argument is the ton of data that shows that Christians had worshiped on the first day of the week, that is, the day following the Jewish Sabbath, from apostolic times. Seventh-day Sabbatarians try their hardest to “prove” that references to the first day are an aberration, but the evidence against them is overwhelming.¹⁹ The earliest church assembled twice on Sunday, in the morning and then later at sundown.

Ignatius, *To the Magnesians* 9.1 (c. AD 107) – If, then, those who had lived in antiquated practices came to newness of hope, no longer keeping the Sabbath but living in accordance with the Lord’s day, on which our life also arose through him and his death...

Epistle of Barnabas 15.9 – (early 2nd century) - we spend the eighth day [Sunday] in celebration, the day on which Jesus both arose from the dead and, after appearing again, ascended into heaven.

Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67.7 (c. AD 155) – And on the day called *Sunday*, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place... But *Sunday* is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the *first day* on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead.

Sunday worship was the common practice of the early church, with the exception of some Jewish Christians.

If Constantine did not establish Sunday as the day of worship, what is it that he did do? He established it as a day of *rest*. That is, he turned the Christian day into a type Sabbath day – but not calling it the Sabbath – prohibiting work on Sundays as early as AD 321. This was probably established in order to even the playing field between Christians – who wanted to worship on Sundays – and pagans, who worked without a day of rest. In later centuries, Sunday came to be known as the Christian Sabbath, but this was a later, medieval innovation.

Thus, Constantine affirmed that Christians can and should worship on Sundays, but in no way “changed the Sabbath” to Sunday.

9. Constantine made December 25 the date of Christmas

False, mainly

Every Christmas season, some cable network runs a documentary “proving” that Jesus was not born on December 25 and that his birth was pegged to a pagan holiday of the sun, the Saturnalia. Jesus must have been born in the spring, or summer, or autumn! After all, why would shepherds be outside in December?

First, because December in Bethlehem is not December in the frozen north. The shepherds would have needed a sweater, and that’s that! A website for tourists who want to visit Bethlehem for Christmas are advised “the Bethlehem winter weather is still warm compared to European winters...[but] you will need at least a light coat and an umbrella just in case.”²⁰

Second, because Christians were pegging Christ's birth to December 25 long before Constantine came along. The church father Hippolytus (AD 180-220) calculated the date based on his notions about the date God created the heavens and the earth, and decided Jesus had to have been born on December 25. Many disagreed. By the late 3rd century much of the church was opting for December.

There are some pagan customs – such as the exchange of gifts – that may have become part of Christian celebrations, but the idea that Christmas was “invented” by Constantine and made December 25 is a myth.

10. Constantine make the church accept Easter Sunday

False, mainly

It was apparently the oral consensus of Nicea²¹ that the church should firm up the date of Holy Week. Rather than a canon, Constantine wrote to the absent bishops to tell them that it would fall on a Sunday from then on –

When the question relative to the sacred festival of Easter arose, it was universally thought that it would be convenient that all should keep the feast on *one* day; for what could be more beautiful and more desirable, than to see this festival, through which we receive the hope of immortality, celebrated by all with one accord, and in the same manner?...[that is] the legitimate mode of celebrating Easter, which we have observed from the time of the Saviour's Passion to the present day...²²

He goes on to say that the church will celebrate it on Sunday, not according to the Jewish calendar; he also offers some gratuitous insults toward the Jewish custom.

Some take this to mean that Constantine forced the church to abandon the traditional Jewish dating of Passover and instead to wed the Passion to a pagan celebration. Unfortunately this disregards plenty of history. In fact, the church had been bickering over the date of Holy Week for centuries!²³ One side argued that the church should observe the Jewish tradition and place the Passover on the 14th day of Nisan – hence they had the name Quartodecimans (the “Fourteeners”!). Their opponents said that it was more important to celebrate Jesus' death on the Friday and his resurrection on a Sunday, hence Easter is the first Sunday after the Passover full moon. This position became dominant.

Constantine pressed the church to accept what had become the majority opinion, and to avoid the dissension that comes from opposing holidays. In fact, some eastern churches still observe a different calculation. But Constantine did not invent the new dating system.

11. Constantine selected which books would go in the Bible

False. Just false

According to Dan Brown, “The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.” The evidence? Well, there is none. The gospels were already thought to be four in number, no more and no less, in the mid-2nd century – almost two centuries before Nicea. Some books were doubted by some Christians, but the lists of the New Testament books in the later 2nd century more or less match what we have in the Bible today.

The canon of the New Testament was not even on the agenda at Nicea. Nor is there any historical reference to Constantine burning the “excluded” books afterward.

12. Constantine changed the New Testament text and thus changed its teaching

False. Just false

Let’s separate fact from fiction. The fact is that Constantine ordered Eusebius to prepare 50 Bibles in the year AD 331 –

I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church, to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practised in their art.²⁴

It is possible that the superbly-produced 4th-century manuscripts Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are two of these 50 Bibles, but that is by no means certain.

The rest is pure conspiracy theory, usually propounded by devotees of the *Textus receptus* or King James Onlyists. Here is an example of their unlikely claims:²⁵

In 331 AD, Emperor Constantine ordered that an “ecumenical Bible” be written. Constantine wanted a Bible which would be acceptable to pagans as well as Christians, and Eusebius (the Bishop of Caesaria and a follower of Origen) was assigned to direct this task. Eusebius rejected the deity of Christ and claimed that Christ was a created being. This error, called the Arian heresy, is taught by the Roman Catholic Church.

(Want proof? The pope has declared the Vulgate as the “infallible [sic] Bible” and the Vulgate is Arian, since it removes the deity [sic] of Christ.) In any event, Eusebius, being a devout student of Origen's work, gladly obliged Emperor Constantine's request, and sent him manuscripts filled with Alexandrian corruption.

My goodness, where does one start?

- “ecumenical” is added as a buzzword to tip off King James Onlyists that Constantine was a liberal. He was not.
- Eusebius argued for, not against, the deity of Christ
- He was not an Arianist
- He did not claim Christ was a created being
- The Roman church does not teach Arianism!
- The Vulgate does so teach the deity of Christ (and the words are spelled “deity” and “infallible”) – One example: “In principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum *et Deus erat Verbum.*” = “And the Word was God,” John 1:1.
- We have no idea what copies of the Bible Eusebius sent to Constantine
- Consider these verses, all contained in Codex Vaticanus, if that even be relevant: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exod 20:3), or “Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God” (Lev 19:4) or “No man cometh unto the Father but by me” (Jesus in John 14:6) – in what universe would these and the thousands of other verses of the Bible be acceptable to pagans or anyone but Christians?
- The “Alexandrian errors” are mythological, based on another conspiracy theory, known to readers of Jack Chick’s publications, that people rewrote the Bible. In fact, all the earlier manuscripts – including the very recent discovery of a 1st-century scrap of Mark 5. – back the Alexandrian text. The text that teaches the Trinity, the deity of Christ, salvation by grace through faith, and so on. Better to trust actual manuscripts instead of Jack Chick’s nightmares!

13. Constantine made the Greek Testament the accepted version

False

According to some, the New Testament was written in Hebrew, later translated into Greek in which many errors were introduced. Then someone (Constantine, probably!) torched all of the Hebrew copies of the New Testament.

If so, they why don't we have any ancient Hebrew copies of the New Testament, and almost 6000 copies of the Greek?

Well, of course there are no Hebrew New Testaments, is the rejoinder. And that just proves that they must have been torched! This is a prime example of a conspiracy theory, where the complete lack of evidence is taken as evidence.

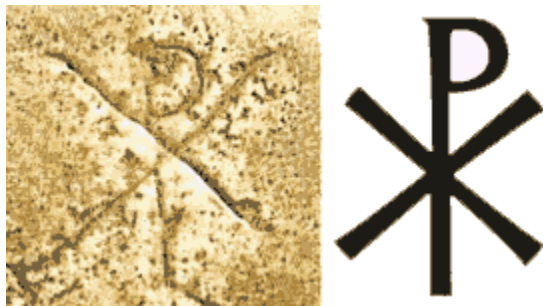
Zero evidence, zero proof, lots of theorizing.

14. Constantine made the cross a new symbol for Christianity

Not really

Let's end with one more tidbit, this notion that Constantine "invented" the cross as the symbol of Christianity or brought it in from paganism.²⁶ The Jehovah's Witnesses, among others, go for this one. Some claim that the cross is an ancient pagan symbol (of course it is – any geometrical pattern you can think of, the square, the circle, the triangle, an X, even the swastika, has been a symbol in antiquity!).

While it is true that he used that symbol, it doesn't mean he invented it. This is one of those cases where further historical investigation has overturned a myth. There is now evidence that Christians used the cross, along with the anchor, the fish, the dove as a symbol. The cross was not the dominant symbol, but it was a known and important one. Here are two examples from the catacombs of Rome, carved before the conversion of Constantine:



Conclusion

Who was Constantine and what was his faith? The controversy will continue, but a fair assessment is that he believed himself to be a Christian, although for some years he also continued certain pagan practices. His experience at the Milvian Bridge was genuine, although later probably mythologized and also turned into an instantaneous moment of conversion. He used the known Christian Chi-Rho symbol, but did not invent it. His actions as the "First Christian Emperor" were a mixed bag of the abuse of power and the growing use of his power to help the church. He made Christianity and other religions legal, invited many Christians into his government, and made life harder for pagans. He gave Christians and Jewish leaders similar privileges. He intervened in some theological disputes, principally to push church leaders to act

in harmony. Especially, he presided over the Nicene Council in 325, and pushed for unity, but did not invent the doctrines of the deity of Christ or the Trinity. Neither he nor Nicea ever took up the topics of the Bible canon. Constantine had nothing to do with any supposed revision of the Greek New Testament. He did not force the Christian faith on everyone, but he certainly made it easier for people to convert. He linked the long-held custom of Sunday worship with the concept of rest from work, and helped to affirm the dates of Christmas and Easter according to longstanding church practice.

This is Constantine so far as history will allow. He set in motion the Christianization of the Empire and centuries of officially-recognized version of the faith. But the Christian faith, whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant, cannot be called his creation.

NOTES:

¹ See <http://www.sabbathtruth.com/sabbath-history/how-the-sabbath-was-changed>

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http://www.friendsofsabbath.org/Further_Research/Paganism%20&%20RCC/Babylon%20Mystery%20Religion%20-RalphWoodrow.pdf It is unfortunate that this book keeps getting passed around in tens of thousands of copies in many languages, and today on the internet – it is a volume that should have been set aside years ago as a poorly-researched screed against Rome by someone who believes that Catholicism is secretly the ancient Babylonian paganism under new management. Woodrow later distanced himself from some of Hislop’s shakier conclusions, but still accepts his basic premise.

³ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, available here - [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339,_Eusebius_Caesariensis,_Vita_Constantini_\[Schaff\],_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339,_Eusebius_Caesariensis,_Vita_Constantini_[Schaff],_EN.pdf)

⁴ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, available here - http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339,_Eusebius_Caesariensis,_Church_History,_EN.pdf

⁵ One Orthodox writer puts it this way: “Constantine's conversion follows more closely the Orthodox understanding of salvation than the Protestant understanding. Where Protestants, especially evangelicals, tend to see salvation in terms of a one-time conversion experience, Orthodoxy sees salvation as a mystery and as a process that unfolds over time.” See: <http://www.antiochian.org/constantine-great-roman-emperor-christian-saint-historys-turning-point>

⁶ See the useful website “Christians Themes in Byzantine Coinage.” - <http://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=christian%20themes%20in%20byzantine%20coinage>

⁷ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, volume III.

⁸ Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.10-12. For example: “Julius Caius, praetor [consul] of Rome, to the magistrates, senate, and people of the Parians, sendeth greeting. The Jews of Delos, and some other Jews that sojourn there in the presence of your ambassadors, signified to us, that, by a decree of yours, you forbid them to make use of the customs of their forefathers, and their way of sacred worship...[to the contrary] I permit these Jews to gather themselves together, according to the customs and laws of their forefathers, and to persist therein.”

⁹ From Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 48. There is a nice summary of Roman legislation concerning Christianity on this site – <http://www.fourthcentury.com/imperial-laws-and-letters-involving-religion-ad-311-364/>

¹⁰ From Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, emphasis added. Text available here - [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339,_Eusebius_Caesariensis,_Vita_Constantini_\[Schaff\],_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339,_Eusebius_Caesariensis,_Vita_Constantini_[Schaff],_EN.pdf)

¹¹ <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/249-roman-laws>. I don't want to quote from the website "The Roman Empire Adopts Christianity" in Free Crash Course in Jewish History. In an essay of 1-2 pages it is rife with basic errors, even getting basic dates wrong.

¹² "Your excellent authority shall order the governors to assemble, in order that they shall learn and know, that it is necessary to repel the assaults of those who attack Jews, and that their synagogues should remain in their accustomed peace." (AD 397)

¹³ "We want the Jews, their principals, and their patriarchs informed, that if anyone – once this law has been given – dare attack by stoning or by other kind of fury one escaping from their deadly group and raising his eyes to God's cult [Christianity], which as we have learned is being done now, he shall be delivered immediately to the flames and burnt with his associates. But if one of the people [a Christian] shall approach their nefarious sect and join himself to their conventicles [synagogues], he shall suffer with them the deserved punishments."
[<http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/249-roman-laws>]

¹⁴ See this article on the *Da Vinci Code* – https://www.jashow.org/articles/society-culture-politics-2/davinci-code/is-it-true-that-jesus-divinity-was-invented-by-constantine-at-the-council-of-nicea/#cite_note-1

¹⁵ *Watchtower* 1983 Sep 15 pp.7-8

¹⁶ <https://www.probe.org/the-council-of-nicea-2/>

¹⁷ Martyrdom of Polycarp 14.3 (Holmes). See also <http://www.bible.ca/H-trinity.htm>.

¹⁸ <http://www.sabbathtruth.com/sabbath-history/how-the-sabbath-was-changed>

¹⁹ The reader who would like to explore this theme further should read *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Investigation*, ed. By D. A. Carson, and in particular chapter 9, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," by R. J. Bauckham.

²⁰ <http://bethlehem-israel.info/weather-forecast/>

²¹ Here is a complete list of the 20 “canons” or decisions of Nicea - <http://www.fourthcentury.com/nicaea-325-canons/>

²² See NPNF 2, 14, p. 54.

²³ See “Quartodecimanism,” in *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*.

²⁴ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4.36.

²⁵ <http://www.1611kingjamesbible.com/constantine.html/>

²⁶ Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, 5.6 – “The Sign of the Cross.”