



# The Lion and Lamb

A ministry serving the Body of Christ

## Paganism in the Church

*(Transcript of a talk to the first ex-cultist class. Emphasis added throughout to indicate voice inflection.)*

Tonight I want to talk about “Paganism In The Church.” And friends, I will not be holding back during this presentation. The time has come for us to see the reality of this age-old controversy between good and evil. Multitudes of Christians complacently accept the trappings of heathen doctrine without even recognizing its evil origin. Unless we know the full truth of what the Bible teaches on these great doctrines, the enemy of our souls will be able to masquerade his own lies in the costume of truth.

Today there are only two supernatural powers operating in the world around us—the power of God and the power of Satan. If something is taking place before our eyes that has no explanation from a human basis, it would have to be accounted for by one of the great superhuman powers of God or Satan.

Tonight I would like for us to trace through time, and through the Bible, how the devil has so cleverly counterfeited many of the good things of God that millions today actually ascribe good things to Satan and evil things to God. The impersonation and imitation on the part of Satan has been so subtle and deceptive that entire Christian churches have been deceived by it.

It all started in the days of Adam and Eve when God instituted a ceremony after the entrance of sin. It was to be a temporary system pointing forward to a divine Savior who would redeem the world from the curse of sin and death. It revolved around the slaying of a lamb representing the Messiah who would later come to give his own life as an atoning substitute for man. That system of sacrifice was not easy for Adam and Eve to carry out. They had to watch an innocent animal bleed to death by their own hand. Every time they lifted that knife to cut the throat of another beautiful lamb, their own sin and its terrible results would come vividly to mind.

The Bible doesn’t give us any details about this first ceremony. It only tells us that God clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins. In order for him to do that, one or more of his newly created animals had to die. We can infer the institution of the sacrificial system from this time from God’s early reference to a future Savior and by the fact that in the very next chapter of Genesis we find Cain and Abel making sacrifices and offerings before God. Why would they do that if not taught? So we know that God gave the instructions for the sacrifices at the very beginning of the history of mankind—long before Moses. Many believe the sacrificial system was only for the Jews. Here we find it 2,500 years before there were even a people on earth who later became known as “Jews”.

From what we know of Satan’s actions with the human race, beginning in the Garden of Eden, we can imagine that he watched Adam very closely as he went through this ceremony. By

observing the symbolism of that sacrificial offering Satan realized that God had given Adam a way of escape from his sinful dilemma, and Satan determined to do something about it. If he could set up his own sacrificial system that would turn men away from the worship of God, he could be worshiped instead of the Creator. By cleverly counterfeiting the institutions of God, Satan himself could build a religious system that would honor him instead of the true God of heaven. So immediately he began to set about to institute his own sacrificial system that would even demand more than God's system. As we shall find, it even required the offering up of sons and daughters. Also, since God had established a special holy day for His worship in the Garden of Eden—the Sabbath—Satan determined that he also would have a special day of worship that would glorify him.

The overall counterfeit plan of Satan involved robbing God of His authority and worship. In Isaiah 14:13,14 the course was laid out by the boastful words of Lucifer. He said, "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 ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

**There is the embryo of Satan's plan.** If he intended to be like God, he would have to have a government, a throne, and a false worship based on a counterfeit religion. I want you to see how he established that substitute form of worship. It was to be set up on the principle of sun worship. Since the sun was the most potent force in nature and was the source of earthly light and power, it seemed a ready made symbol of Satan himself and what he was seeking to ascribe to himself.

But let's pause now and get the Bible authority for this plan of the devil. First of all, notice that Lucifer's name actually means "day star." You will find that in the margin of your Bible by Isaiah 14:12. Describing Satan, the Bible says, "you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness" (Ezekiel 28:17). Listen, the daystar of this world is the sun. That is revealed in Genesis 1:16 when God created the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. That is why Lucifer (or Satan) chose the sun as the object through which he would be worshiped. The very name Lucifer means "light" or, as mentioned earlier, "day star." It refers to the **greater light** or the sun. And even though it took hundreds of years to achieve, Satan scored a strategic victory in his campaign for sun worship when he finally was able to substitute the pagan day of sun worship in place of God's true seventh-day Sabbath. And the greatest tragedy is that millions of modern Christians are unaware that, by keeping Sunday, they are rejecting the **one great sign** God commanded men to observe in recognition of His being the only true God. They do not understand that they are observing a day that was dedicated to sun worship many, many centuries ago.

We'll talk more about the Sabbath, why God gave it to mankind, its importance, and its meaning in prophecy in another session. For tonight, I just want you to be aware of the two different days. Many today will tell you that the word "Sabbath" can refer to either Saturday or Sunday. **It can't, it doesn't and it never did.** In this context, the word "Sabbath" means only the seventh day of the week. I have been amazed in reading the historical sources to discover that Sunday-keeping reaches back to hundreds of years before Christ was born. As a matter of fact, Sunday-keeping is almost as old as Sabbath-keeping, because very early in history Satan set up his counterfeit system. The very age of Sunday-keeping makes a liar of any who claim it has anything to do with Christ.

Now, let's look at the biblical background of the practice. The book of Job, so we are told by the biblical authorities, was one of the first books written and may have been written by a contemporary of Moses himself, and did you know that this ancient book talks about the worship of the sun? Listen to this:

“If I have observed the sun when it shines, Or the moon moving *in* brightness, So that my heart has been secretly enticed, And my mouth has kissed my hand; This also *would be* an iniquity *deserving of* judgment, For I would have denied God *who is* above” (Job 31:26-28).

Did you get that? Job said, “If I backslide and my heart has been enticed to worship the sun or the moon, it would be a sinful denial of the true God.”

By the way, maybe you have wondered at times about the origin of the modern religious custom of kissing the hand—this seems to be the root of such a practice—pagan sun worship.

Did you know that God had a hard time with his own people in regards to that satanic practice of sun worship? The devil made it so alluring and fascinating that the children of Israel were constantly turning away from the true Sabbath-keeping and from worshipping the true God of Heaven. Did you ever wonder about the text in Exodus 32:1-6 concerning the golden calf that the Israelites made while Moses was up in the mountain with God? Verse 6 says, “they rose early on the next day.” That calf was called “apis” by the Egyptians and was tied in with their pagan sun worship. That is why they rose up early—to worship the sun. No wonder Moses was so outraged that he threw down the tables of stone and broke them to pieces. Do you see how this thing came into the church long before the days of Jesus?

Now let's look at another interesting fact—you have heard of Baal worship, of course. The Old Testament is full of stories about it. But did you know that Baal worship was sun worship? In 2 Kings 23:5 we read this,

“Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, **to the sun**, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven” (2 Kings 23:5).

There it is in plain language. Satan has perfected an entire false religious system based upon sun worship or Baal worship. And God's own people were often drawn away by it. Satan himself was being worshipped under the title of Baal. The Bible calls Baal worship devil worship. Did you know that? Here it is in Leviticus 17:7,

“They shall no more offer their **sacrifices to demons**, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations” (Leviticus 17:7).

Later on at Baal-peor we read about that terrible apostasy of Israel. In Numbers 25:2-4 it says,

“They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel” (Numbers 25:2-4).

No wonder God was displeased with them; they were worshipping Baal, the sun god, and Baal worship is actually worshipping devils. This is why the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils in the name of Beelzebub. That is the Greek word for the Hebrew name of Baalzebub, the

sun god of Ekran spoken of in 2 Kings 1:2,3. The Pharisees said, “This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 12:24). Here again we have proof that Baal worship is devil worship.

But listen to this: Down through the centuries the distinguishing mark that separated the pagans from God’s people was their day of worship, which was Sunday, or Sun’s day. The pagans worshipped the sun on Sunday. They took the first day of the week and gave it the highest honor by naming it in honor of the sun god and worshipping the sun on that day. God’s people kept the Sabbath, or seventh day of the week—the day that God had blessed and made holy at creation. Thus, the distinguishing mark of the heathen was their Sunday; and the mark of God’s people was the Sabbath. (Read Ezekiel 20:12-20).

Imagine if you can, what a spectacle for the universe to behold! Through the centuries, God’s people kept the commandments of God including the Sabbath and offered their sacrifices, which typified or represented the death of Christ when he would come and die for sinners. On the other hand were the heathen who worshiped the sun, kept Sunday, and offered their own sons and daughters in the fire or crucified human victims on crosses to appease the sun god. I say again, what a terrible thing for Heaven to behold! How the Devil tried to insult Christ’s sacrifice! Satan tried constantly to get God’s people away from the true God and the true Sabbath; but God continued to send messages to His people through the prophets that they should obey Him.

### **The Pagan Origins**

Satan, also, tried to compete for the loyalty of the world by setting up a very ancient center of sun worship called Babylon. To understand what Babylon means, let’s go back to the days after the flood, when men refused to obey the instruction of the Lord to scatter over the earth. Settling on the plains of Shinar (Genesis 11:4),

“And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth’ ” (Genesis 11:4).

They called the tower “Babel, the gate to heaven,” but God called it what it was, “Babel, confusion,” for there the language of the people was confused and they were forced to scatter. This heaven-defying clan of men, inspired by Satan, wanted to have one city, the capital city of the world, one government to rule the world, and one religion to sway the hearts of mankind. It was Satan’s attempt to defy God and His authority. The ringleader in this scheme was one named Nimrod.

We read in the Bible about Nimrod, the man who had something to do with the beginning of pagan sun worship. We read about him in Genesis 10:8-10. “And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (margin, “Babylon”).

In another translation of the Bible called the Targum, we read this: “Nimrod became a mighty man of sin, a murderer of innocent men, and a **rebel** before the Lord.” The Targum is a more accurate translation of the Hebrew word *gibbor*, which means “tyrant” or “rebel,” as well as *warrior, giant, or mighty one*. Looking at what Nimrod later did, *rebel* or *tyrant* is the most logical translation of this word.

Nimrod, one of the great-grandsons of Noah, is accredited with being the originator of sun worship. Nimrod was a great leader, and he was the first empire builder. He was the founder of Babylon. According to history, his wife, Semiramis, was a very great and wicked queen; and through Semiramis we find the devil trying to counterfeit God's great, wonderful plan of salvation. She was the first **deified** queen of Babylon, and Nimrod was the first **deified** king. When Nimrod died, the people mourned. **They said that he was a god.** Semiramis, in order to elevate her own position, said to the people that she was the **queen of heaven** and that her spirit was that of the moon, and when she died she would dwell in the moon, even as **Nimrod was already in the sun.**

Satan was laying the foundation for every system of falsehood and error the world has ever known. They took the Truth of God and perverted it, changed it into a lie, and "worshipped and served the creature (Satan) more than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). Some translations say, "they worshipped and served the **created** rather than the **Creator.**" Either/or, it is saying pretty much the same thing. Here is a truth that should be deeply impressed upon your minds today: **Paganism is devil worship.** It doesn't matter how great or how small; the pagan practice is devil worship, whether it is a simple hand gesture or an all-out riotous festival. We are told to have nothing to do with any of it. Let us never forget that this system of religion, while today is professing to be the true religion, is actually devil worship. It professes and claims to be the Truth of God. In reality it is Satan's masterpiece, the "mystery of iniquity."

Every year, when the cold season began, the people believed their sun god was leaving them. They came to learn that his lowest dip on the horizon, about December 21, was followed by his gradual return, until in midsummer he was directly overhead at noonday. It was on the 25th of December that they began to notice this gradual return of the sun god. This day they called the birthday of the sun. Thus, the winter solstice came to be regarded as a time of great importance; and at the festival inaugurated, there was feasting and merriment in honor of the return of the all-powerful sun god. It was their belief in the annual journey of their god that Elijah alluded to in his conflict with the priests of Baal, the Syro-Phoenician sun god.

"And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, 'Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is **on a journey**, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened'." (1 Kings 18:27).

Tammuz was hailed as the son of the sun—remember, the sun was Nimrod and their god; therefore Tammuz was their "son of god". He was idolized and even worshipped. The first letter of his name—Tau—became, in time, the symbol of sun worship. Human sacrifices to the sun god were offered on this initial letter made of wood, known as the cross "T" or + (crossed lines of equal length, a symbol found in the iconography of both the Orthodox and the Catholic Church). His birthday, December 25, was honored more and more. When Tammuz died, the pagans instituted forty days of weeping for him before the full moon, following the vernal equinox (in the spring).

Think of it! Satan worked many years before the conception and birth of the true Messiah, Jesus, to counterfeit, through sun worship, His miraculous conception and birth. Satan is no slouch. The very fact of all of these things being of such ancient origin serves only to confuse people today. Many have turned completely from a belief in Christ or the Bible because their scholarship has led them to discover what are seemingly the same stories in mythology and ancient history. Today it serves to turn even the bible into myth in their minds as well.

That is largely because they don't read or know the Bible. Let me read about these ancient practices mentioned above in the Bible. Perhaps some of you never knew that the Bible mentions this. Often people think that it can only be found in secular works, but that is not true. The Bible addresses it as well. I am reading from Ezekiel 8:12-18. Turn to Ezekiel and follow along with me.

“Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, “The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land”.’ And He said to me, ‘Turn again, *and* you will see greater abominations that they are doing.’ So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord’s house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. Then He said to me, ‘Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these.’ So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshipping the sun toward the east. And He said to me, ‘Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them”.’ ” (Ezekiel 8:12-18)

God’s people were constantly coming in contact with paganism, which was nothing more or less than sun worship. They were constantly being tempted to follow the religion of the pagans instead of the Bible. Satan succeeded many times in leading God’s people into sin and pagan sun worship. The prophet was shown greater and still greater abominations. He was shown the people turning their backs on the temple of God and worshipping the sun toward the east.

They also worshipped the moon goddess, Semiramis, the so-called queen of heaven. Let me read you what they did, in Jeremiah 7:16-18.

“Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you. Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for **the queen of heaven**; and *they* pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger” (Jeremiah 7:16-18).

These cakes were round and on them were cut a cross in honor of the sun god (the equal cross that looks like a “plus” sign), and they were offered to the queen of heaven (Semiramis, also known as Ishtar and Isis). Today they are called hot cross buns—very much a part of some Easter traditions even yet.

Let us notice now a few striking and outstanding things that took place; and keep in mind that the devil, who is really the author of pagan sun worship, had been working for centuries to get this false worship so implanted in the world that God’s true plan of salvation through Jesus Christ would be insulted and, if possible, be made a failure.

First, the exact date of Christ’s birthday was not known; and so it was suggested, “Why not call it the same date as the birth of Tammuz, which was December 25?” That, too, was the time when the sun had reached its lowest point on the horizon and started back up the heavens. The sun god had come to life, so to speak. Thus, gradually but surely, December 25 came to be known as the birthday of Christ. The papal church finally instituted a special mass on that day, “Christ’s

Mass,” and so December 25 became “Christmas.” The yule log burning in the fire, followed by the green tree lighted with candles, all came in from the pagans’ worship, representing Nimrod’s being dead, while his spirit still lived in the sun, and was alive again in Tammuz, his son.

Again, Christ was crucified and resurrected in the spring of the year, near the time of the moon festival. The devil was on hand again to bring in the idea of having a celebration the same time as the heathen and even doing as they did, but calling it “in honor of the resurrection.” The cakes to the QUEEN OF HEAVEN became the “hot cross buns.” (Read Jeremiah 7:16-18). The forty days of “weeping for Tammuz” became Lent, and at the close of Lent came Easter Sunday. (Read Ezekiel 8:12-18). This goddess Ishtar (Easter) came to be known as the goddess of springtime, “new life,” or as history records it, the “goddess of reproduction.” The pagans went out to some mountainside, early Sunday morning and worshipped this goddess as the sun was rising in the east. They gave themselves to immorality and indecency of every description. The eggs and rabbits were used as symbols of fertility and germination, “life.”

What an insult to our Lord and Savior, Jesus! Because He arose from the dead (came to life) early Sunday morning, Satan succeeded in transferring the insulting festival of the pagans over in honor of Christ’s resurrection; and so today, we still have the EGGS and RABBITS, and the HOT CROSS BUNS and the early SUNRISE SERVICE, all in honor of Christ’s resurrection. It all came into the church gradually and was blessed by the Catholic Church and given to the world.

### **The Symbol of the Cross**

Although the cross has become a revered relic and often even an object of worship, I would like to explore the ancient background of this cherished symbol. Earlier we discovered that the Bible describes the worship of Tammuz, the Pagan God of the Sun. Satan inspired those idolatrous people to represent Tammuz by the letter “T,” the first letter of his name. It came to be a world-wide symbol of sun worship and all the moral pollutions attached to that kind of worship. The heathen actually scarified human beings to the devil on crosses. Did they know they were sacrificing to the devil? Probably not! While his fingerprints are all over the pagan system, the practitioners of those rites very likely believed they were honoring their god, the sun. The truth that the author was Satan was carefully hidden from them. Nevertheless, centuries before Jesus was born, crucifixion was a method of worshipping the pagan sun god.

When sun-worshipping generals went to battle they offered thousands of human sacrifices to the devil. It is said that Alexander the Great, after a victorious campaign, crucified over 10,000 human beings on the cross to celebrate his victory. Three-thousand chief Babylonians were crucified at one time as a sacrifice to the Devil (the sun).

When the Catholics first went down into South America and Mexico, soon after these continents were discovered, they were amazed to find that the sun-worshipping heathen there had crosses. They were amazed because they did not know that these people knew anything about crosses. They did not know anything about Christianity, but they had crosses because they were the sign of Tammuz—the Sun God. And Satan’s counterfeit worship system had spread all around the globe long before the birth of Christ.

The time finally came for the Son of God to be born. The exact day of His birth no one knows. But He lived to be thirty-three and one-half when He was crucified, which was in the spring of the year at the time of the Passover. It is almost too terrible for words. You remember Tammuz was exalted by Satan to be the false Messiah or rival of Jesus. The symbol of the cross, the first

letter of his name, “T”, was the sign of sun worship. Down through the years, many times as Satan had succeeded in leading Israel into sin and Pagan sun worship, it had seemed that the sun god was victorious over the true God. Jesus, through whom the world was created, came into a world that had forgotten Him. He suffered every insult at its hands and, finally, died upon the symbol of sun worship, the cross; as Paul says, “Even the death of the cross.” Have you ever wondered why Paul said it that way? Why this type of death for our Lord and Savior was so awful? Most of Christendom is referred to the biblical reference that says “cursed is one who hangs on a tree”—and well there should be a curse. As Paul Harvey would say, “Now you know the ***rest of the story.***”

In order to show that his system of worship was superior to that of God’s and to show his supremacy, Satan heaped the supreme insult upon Christ by crucifying Him upon the cross, the symbol of sun worship! Think of the Son of God dying in such awful humiliation while the people looked on, in derision. What mockery! And what rejoicing then by the demons! The Son of God delivered by His own people and crucified by the sun-worshiping Romans on the symbol of sun worship! Think of the great Son of God dying in such awful humiliation while the people looked on, wagging their heads in mockery.

It is easy for us today to pass over these facts lightly. Times have changed and we have learned to revere the cross. Today we don’t understand the mockery of the witnesses to Jesus’ death as having anything to do with the fact he was crucified on a symbol of sun-worship because the knowledge of that sun-worship has been lost to us by its almost total metamorphosis into what we know today as Christianity. But at the time of Jesus, pagan practices were much more identifiable. We are talking about the Jewish people who were very, very aware of the practices of the pagan world around them. Today the boundaries have become blurred and our very salvation depends on us making those boundaries clear once again.

Getting back to our subject—Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the Heavenly Universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. The last link of sympathy was broken. “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10. Yet Satan was not then destroyed. For the sake of man, his existence must be continued. Men, as well as angels, must see the contrast between the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.

Now as we look at Calvary, what do we see? We see the true Son of God with His form stripped of all of its clothing. He is hung before the sun, on the symbol of the cross—the cross that was the symbol of heathen worship and heathen pollution. And on that afternoon, the sun was darkened. God placed His hand over the sun while Christ hung upon the cross. The blackening of the sun by God’s hand was not just an incidental thing. It had some significance to it. (Luke 23:44). There was a reason why that sun was darkened. You see, that sun to the heathen was the symbol of the Sun God (Satan). So God placed His hand over the sun to show that He controlled the sun. God said, “That is as far as you can go.” God darkened the sun to prove He was the creator and had power over these things!

Now let’s answer a most important question. Do you know why Jesus came forth from the tomb before daybreak on that Sunday morning? According to all the background I have given, you must realize that at sunrise on the first day of the week men would be worshiping the Sun, or the Devil, while Jesus Christ would be in the tomb. Yes, at sunrise Satan would be worshipped. It is

the night of Jesus' death—the moments are tense. To make sure of his victim, the devil inspired men to have the tomb of Jesus Christ sealed with a seal. Do you know what the name of that seal was? It is called the Roman seal, but in Latin the name was "SINGLEM-SOLIS," which in Latin means, "The seal of the sun." So on that tomb of Jesus Christ they placed "Singlem-solis," the seal of the sun god, and the Devil thought he had his victim there to stay. He sealed Him with the seal of the sun.

But on the first day of the week, it was revealed before daylight just who was superior. Christ rested in His tomb as the Sabbath passed on. He knew that sun worshippers everywhere, the moment the sun rose, would worship Satan. But before the rising of the Sun, when the stone is still in place and there are over 100 Roman guards on watch, together with a host of evil angels and Satan, something happens. There are other visitors there also, angels that excel in strength were there to welcome the Prince of Life. So in John 20:1 it says He came forth "while it was yet dark." Look also at Matthew 28:2-6.

Here is the reason why Jesus came forth on the first day of the week while it was yet dark. It was because God did not permit the Devil to be worshipped on his day when the sun rose while His Son was still in the tomb. God brought Him forth from the dead, and he came forth while it was yet dark for God did not leave His Son in that tomb while the Devil would be worshipped on his day. God saw fit to bring forth His Son, and He was able to proclaim as He came forth from that grave, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Jesus Christ on Calvary and in His resurrection conquered. He came forth as an eternal conqueror, and where the resurrection is questioned, the atonement is forgotten. We are not left to conclude for ourselves that Jesus triumphed over Satan. God's Word declares it (Colossians 2:15). There were principalities and powers there that morning, but Christ triumphed over them! And Jesus Christ was out of that tomb when the sun rose, and the Devil was not worshipped while Christ lay in His tomb. Christ's victory was over the grave, and principalities, and everything that Satan stood for.

It had been Satan's plan to make the first day of the week—the pagan day of the sun—a triumphant celebration over the defeat and death of Jesus. But he lost that opportunity when Christ burst the power of the tomb before those heathen worshipers could gather to have their sun-day ceremonies. God did not allow them to triumph over the death of His Son. Satan had failed in his efforts to exalt the pagan day of sun worship.

But what a tragedy that 300 years later, Satan was able to accomplish what he failed to do at Calvary. By a clever compromise with heathen sun worship, he influenced a backsliding church to accept the counterfeit Sunday in place of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Let's take a brief look at the way it all happened.

The Pagans worshiped the sun on Sunday (Sun's day). It was the heathen festival in honor of the sun god. *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* says of Sunday, "So called because the day was anciently dedicated to the sun or to its worship." *The North British Review*, Vol. 18, p. 409; calls Sunday "the wild solar holiday of all Pagan times." And Gibbon, in a note; paragraph 2, chapter 20, says that "Constantine styles the Lord's day Dies Solis (day of the sun), a name which could not offend the ears of his Pagan subjects." The *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* has the following to say on the subject of Sunday: "Sunday (Dies Solis of the Roman calendar, day of the sun: because dedicated to the sun), the first day of the week, was adopted by the early Christians as a

day of worship. The (Sun) of Latin adoration, they interpreted as the (Sun of Righteousness) ... No regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, nor, indeed is its observance ever enjoined.”

Think of it, the Sabbath (seventh day), which God blessed and made holy for man to worship the true God upon, was gradually set aside and the festival day of Pagan sun worship was taken into the church. Professor Hutton Webster, Ph.D., in his book “*Rest Day*,” p. 270; has this to say: “What began, however, as a Pagan ordinance, ended as a Christian regulation, and a long series of imperial decrees, during the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries enjoined with increasing stringency abstinence from labor on Sunday.”

Paganism with all of its pomp, and ceremonies, and holy days crept silently into the Christian Church until it developed into an Apostate system of religious worship. Notice this statement from *Schaff's Church History*, page 375; “Not a few pagan habits crept into the church concealed by new names. This is conceded by the most earnest of the Fathers. Leo the Great speaks of Christians in Rome who worshiped the sun, before repairing to the church of St. Peter. In the celebration of Sunday, as it was introduced by Constantine, and still continues on the whole continent of Europe, the cultus of the old Sun god Apollo mingles with the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ.”

So that is the story concerning the devil’s most masterful deception of all history. Not only did he bring in the Pagan forms of worship, but also he managed to install the old heathen day of sun worship in place of the holy Sabbath of the Lord. And he continues to blind people to what the Bible teaches on this subject, so that they will still follow pagan tradition instead of the commandments of God. No wonder Jesus exclaimed

“And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9).