

Sunday actually made very little headway as a Christian day of rest until the time of Constantine in the fourth century.

Constantine was emperor of Rome from AD 306 to 337. He was a sun worshiper during the first years of his reign. Later, he professed conversion to Christianity, but at heart remained a devotee of the sun. Edward Gibbon says, "The Sun was universally celebrated as the invincible guide and protector of Constantine."ⁱ

Constantine's Conversion by Peter Paul Rubens
Source: Wikimedia Commons....

Constantine created the earliest Sunday law known to history in AD 321. It says this:

*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 so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting: lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.*ⁱⁱ

Chamber's Encyclopedia says this:

*Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that Day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, 321 A.D.*ⁱⁱⁱ

Following this initial legislation, both emperors and Popes in succeeding centuries added other laws to strengthen Sunday observance. What began as a pagan ordinance ended as a Christian regulation. **Close on the heels of the Edict of Constantine followed the Catholic Church Council of Laodicea (circa 364 AD):**

Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday (Sabbath), but shall work on that Day: but the Lord's Day, they shall especially honour; 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.^{iv}

SUNDAY SERVICES

Early believers kept Saturday as the Sabbath until March 7, 321 CE when Pope Constantine passed a law requiring believers to worship on Sunday, the day the pagans worshipped the sun-god. Believers still kept Saturday as the Sabbath until another law was passed eleven years later. This law signed into decree by Pope Constantine forbid believers to worship on the Sabbath (*Saturday*) and it was punishable by death by the Catholic Church. Many believers were burned to death by the Catholic Church for keeping the Sabbath.