

a wealthy Roman Christian. Therefore, let's see what the Roman Christians have to say about how the connection between Christ and December 25th came to be. To do that, we can turn to the Catholic Education Resource Center. Here is a quote from the answer to a question posted to their site regarding when Christ was born:

Prior to the legalization of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine in the year 313, no universal date or even formal celebration of Christmas is found. ... After legalization, the Church was better able to establish universal dates of feasts and to organize the public celebration. Moreover, we now see the Church addressing controversies concerning Jesus as true God and true man and how He entered this world. Such concern would focus more attention on the importance of celebrating Christmas, the birth of our Lord. On the more practical side of this issue, Roman pagans used to gather at the hill where the Vatican is presently located to commemorate the "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" This pagan feast was celebrated throughout the Empire either on Dec. 25 (according to the Julian Calendar) or on Jan. 6 (according to the Egyptian calendar). Although not proven with certainty, some historians credit Constantine, who declared Sunday as a day; of rest in the Empire, with replacing the pagan festival with that of Christmas. Interestingly, since the 200s, Jesus was

honored with the title, "Sun of Justice." Somehow all of these elements converged to the formal celebration of Christmas on Dec. 25. For instance, Christmas was celebrated in Rome by Pope Liberius (352-66) on Dec. 25.

The article at the Catholic Education and Resource Center's website tells us that there was no formal celebration, or even a universal date for Christmas before the fourth century in Rome. This means that for roughly three hundred after Christ was crucified, Christians were not celebrating the birth of Christ or a holiday called Christmas on the 25th of December. The quote goes on to state that a pagan festival called the "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" which was celebrated on the 25th of December, was replaced by the celebration of Christmas on the same day. We can turn back to the Chronography of 354 to confirm that there was indeed a pagan festival which celebrated the birth of the unconquered sun on December 25th.

Part 6 of the Chronography of 354 is the actual calendar. When we look next to the 25th of December we find the words "N • INVICTI • CM • XXX". The letter "N" is short for Natalis or birthday. INVICTI means unconquered and was synonymous with the phrase "unconquered son" at the time. The letters "CM" mean Circenses Missus or games ordered. The three X's are simply Roman numerals. Each X

represents 10. When we put all of that together we come up with Birthday • Unconquered Sun • Games Ordered • 30 on the 25th of December.

Roman worship of Sol (the sun) is evident from the very earliest records of the city, well before Jesus was born. The Romans of the day were not shy about showing their devotion to "Sol Invictus" and the importance of sun worship in 4th century Roman culture cannot be overstated. The celebration of the birth of the unconquered sun (sol invictus) on December 25th shown in the chronography of 354 is nothing less than sun worship. Remember part 8 from this same document also places the birth of Christ on December 25th. We continue to see that there is a connection between Christ and the 25th of December, and that the connection seems to have originated in Rome sometime before or during the fourth century. Now we also see that the 25th of December was connected to sun worship before it was connected to Christ. The quote from the Catholic Education and Resource Center also states that "Jesus was honored with the title, 'Sun of Justice'". It is not an "honor" for Christ to have the title of a pagan deity applied to Him, but this is how the connection came to be. By the 4th century, the church in Rome had combined sun worship with the worship of the Son of God. This resulted in the holiday that is now called Christmas.

How did the birth of Christ get connected with December 25th?

The Bible doesn't instruct us to celebrate the birth of Christ, or a festival called Christmas. The Bible also doesn't tell us exactly when Christ was born. Therefore, the answer to this question must be found outside of the Bible, in historical documents. One of the oldest references to the birth of Christ being on the 25th of December is contained in the 8th part of the Chronography of 354. The Chronography of 354 is an early Roman calendar. The 8th part contains the consular feasts from the fall of the kings to AD 354. In the 8th part, next to the year AD 1 and translated into English is this statement: "When these were consuls, Jesus Christ was born 8 days before the Kalends of January on the day of Venus...???". Depending on how one counts the days, eight days before January comes out to either December 24th or 25th. The common interpretation is December 25th, which coincides with the day that is now commonly celebrated as His birthday.

This document shows that the birthday of Christ was connected to December 25th early on, but it doesn't tell us how this connection came to be. The Chronography of 354 was produced for

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Christmas, The Connection

Christmas
Ch 2 The Connection

This informational pamphlet gives the reader a basic understanding of how the birth of Christ got connected to December 25th

