

## ENTER CONSTANTINE (288-337 A.D.)

The second important event in the history of the biblical Text began when Constantine became Emperor. Although he professed to embrace Christianity, it is extremely doubtful that he ever converted. The facts concerning his "conversion" have been distorted in order to help perpetuate the adoration of the cross image in the church.

Constantine was going into a major battle amid division among his ranks. Many of his troops were Christians and many more were not. He knew he was out-numbered and stood to lose the battle. On the day before the Battle of Milvian Bridge (located under the walls of Rome), Constantine prayed to the sun-god and there appeared a cross – so we are told – over the setting sun with the inscription: "*In hoc signo Vinctes*" ("in this sign conquer"). Research into the matter indicates that the cross which Constantine is supposed to have seen resembled a capital "T" with a little loop at the top. In Egypt it was known as an *ankh*. Such was never a Christian symbol. It has always been a religious symbol of the Babylonian cult, a pagan sect which spread all over the world and is known in different cultures under many different names. Everywhere the cultic symbols were the same – the main object of worship was that of an image of a mother holding an infant.

## THE "MYSTERIES" AND THEIR BEGINNING<sup>1</sup>

The origin of this image may be traced back to Babylon at the time of the Tower of Babel. The Tower was built under the direction of the founder of the world's first kingdom, Nimrod-bar-Cush, the son of Cush ("the black one") and grandson of Ham ("the dark or the sunburned one"). Secular records state that Nimrod (Orion, or Kronos [a corona or crown] "the horned one") married the infamous Semiramis I. She is reputed to have been the foundress of the Babylonian "Mysteries" and the first high priestess of idolatry. Tradition also ascribes the invention of the use of the cross as an instrument of death to this same woman.

Apparently when Nimrod (a black) died, Semiramis became pregnant out of wedlock. The child, like its father, was white. Semiramis acting to save the moment declared that Nimrod's spirit had become one with the sun – incarnated with the sun – and that he had come to her in the night so that she had miraculously conceived a god-son. As the first mortal to be so deified, Nimrod thus became the actual "father of the gods". Semiramis presented the infant to the people and hailed him as the promised "seed of the woman" – the deliverer. Thus was introduced the "mystery" of the mother and the child, a form of idolatry that is older than any other known to man.

The rites were secret. Only the initiated were permitted to know its mysteries, and it – along with all of its "offspring" cults – became known as various "mystery" religions. The whole system of the secret Mysteries of Babylon was intended to glorify a dead man while Semiramis gained glory from her dead husband's "deification". The people did not want to retain God in their knowledge, but preferred some visible object of worship. Wherever the Negro aspect of Nimrod was found to be an obstacle to his worship, a simple solution was found. As the Chaldeans believed in reincarnation and the transmigration of souls, it was taught that Nimrod had reappeared in the person of his fair complected, supernaturally conceived son (Hislop, p. 69) – thus the father and son were one. It was Satan's attempt to delude mankind with a counterfeit imitation that was so much like the truth of God that man would not know the true Seed of the woman when He came in the fullness of time.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Bros. Inc., 1916). Hislop's is the classic text on this subject, and much of the material under this heading has been gleaned from him; especially pp. 91-103 and note p. 93.

Eventually this mystery religion spread from Babylon to all the surrounding nations. Everywhere the symbols were the same. The image of "the queen of heaven" (Semiramis - Jer.44:19, 25; compare Isa.47:5 where she is referred to as "the" or "our lady" - *notre dame* in French) with the babe in her arms was seen everywhere. It became the mystery religion of the seafaring Phoenicians and they carried it to the ends of the earth. It was known as Baal (Nimrod - the sun-god) worship in Phoenicia where the mother was known as Astoreth and the child as Tammuz (Tammuz Adonis). In Egypt the cult was known as that of Osiris, Isis and Horus. The mother and child were worshipped as Aphrodite and Eros in Greece, Venus and Cupid in Italy (in Rome the child was formerly called Jupiter). The Chinese called the mother goddess Shingmoo or the "Holy Mother". She is pictured with child in arms and rays of glory around her head (Hislop, p. 21). Among the Druids, the "Virgo-Paritura" was worshipped as the "Mother of God". In India, she was known as Indrani. Near India, the mother and child were known as Devaki and Krishna; in Asia they were Cybele and Deoius.

They were known by many other names in other parts of the world, but regardless of her name and place – she was the wife of Baal, the virgin mother (Hebrew = *alma mater*), the queen of heaven who bore a child although she supposedly never conceived. The mother and child were called by different names, due to the dividing of the languages at Babel. With the passing of time, some of the rites and parts of the doctrine and story varied from place to place and cult to cult, but the essential story always remained the same.

Allied with this central mystery were countless lesser mysteries. Among them were: the teachings of purgatorial purification after death, salvation by countless sacraments such as sprinkling with holy water, priestly absolution, the offering of *round* (sun disks) cakes to the queen of heaven (Jer.7:16-18; 44:15-30), the dedication of virgins to the gods, and weeping for Tammuz for a period of 40 days prior to the festival of Ishtar (Easter) to commemorate Ishtar's (another name for Semiramis, also called Astarte) having received her son back from the dead. Tammuz was said to have been ripped to pieces and slain by a wild boar (the traditional Christmas pig) and afterward brought back to life (Hislop, p. 99). The egg became a sacred symbol depicting the mystery of his "resurrection". The evergreen tree became the symbol of his never ending life and birth at the winter solstice, when a boar's head was eaten (ham on New Year's day) in memory of his conflict. The burning of a Yule log always accompanied this winter celebration. In the cult teaching, the *ankh* – a distinctive cross – was the sacred symbol of Tammuz. As it was the first letter of his name, it signified the life-giving principle (Ezekiel 8 - the women weeping for Tammuz). It is an ancient pagan symbol and did not originate with Christianity as most suppose.

The mystery religion of Babylon, which had begun under Nimrod's direction until its dispersal at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 10 & 11; Isa. 47), continued over the centuries to flourish in the "land of Shinar". When the city of Babylon was destroyed, the high-priest fled with a group of initiates and their sacred vessels and images to Pergamos (Rev.2:12-17). There, the symbol of the serpent was set up as the emblem of the hidden wisdom. From there, many of them crossed the sea and settled in the Po Valley of northeast Italy where the Etruscans lived. When Rome conquered the Etruscans, the Etruscans brought their Babylonian cult religion to Rome where the child was known as Mithras (the mediator). Thus, when Christianity came to Rome, the whorish cult, the counterfeit, was waiting to join in an unholy union with it. These mystery cult teachings eventually invaded the Catholic church which is still full of its traditions, the roots of which lie deep in paganism. Every Roman emperor belonged to this cult. Everyone of means – the upper class – was an initiate. It was the "country club" to which to belong, much as is Freemasonry in many parts of the world today.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Lodge drew all of its basic teachings from various "denominations" within this mystery religion. The major writers within Freemasonry freely confess this, but almost no one reads these works to so learn.

## BACK TO CONSTANTINE<sup>1</sup>

So when Constantine told his troops that he had seen the sign of the cross, the Christians thought he was speaking of the "Christian" cross. The pagans perceived it to be the symbol of Tammuz or Nimrod. It united them together for the battle. Actually, there is little reason to consider this vision as authentic, especially since it has no real historical basis. The only authority from whom the story has been gathered by historians is Eusebius, who confessedly was prone to edification and was accused as a "falsifier of history." Another account, supposedly given by Lactantius – the tutor of Constantine's son Crispus – speaks only of a dream in which the emperor was directed to stamp on the shields of his soldiers "the heavenly sign of God" and thus go forth to battle.<sup>2</sup> That the Lord would command a pagan emperor to make a military banner with the cross emblazoned upon it and to go forth conquering and killing under that sign is altogether inconsistent with the general teaching of the Bible and with the spirit of true Christianity. It is more the spirit of the Crusades, which was not of the Spirit of God.

Further, the Roman Empire of which Constantine was the head had been described in the Scriptures by the prophet Daniel as a "Beast" that was so terrible in the eyes of God that it could not be compared to any earthly beast (Dan.7:1-8). Are we to believe that the Lord Jesus would become the leader of this beast system or that He would give a sun-worshipping emperor a vision, telling him to kill and enter into battle as His representative? We trow not!

Constantine never believed that Jesus was Deity – that He was God with a capital "G". The entire time he professed Christianity he was, as emperor, the high priest or *Pontifex Maximus* of the mystery cult in Rome.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, after his supposed conversion, he committed several murders – including those of his wife and son!<sup>4</sup> Constantine died the high priest of the worshipers of the sun and at the same time claimed to be the "pope" of the church of God on this earth! When Constantine dedicated Constantinople (Istanbul), he used both pagan and Christian rites in the ceremony. His determination to mix together both paganism and Christianity is also witnessed on the coins which he had made.<sup>5</sup> He had a cross placed on them (especially to please the professing Christians) along with representations of Mars or Apollo (Nimrod). At the same time he continued to believe in pagan magic formulas for the protection of crops and the healing of disease.

Why then, if he were not truly a Christian, did he show numerous favors toward the Christian faith? Constantine was a consummate politician. He had seen that years of severe and brutal persecutions had not destroyed the Christian faith. His position was being challenged by a rival Emperor (Maxentius) and as he was in dire need for support from every section of the populace, he thus turned to the Christians in order to unite his divided empire. This was fairly easy to do for by this time the majority of the church leaders were thinking in terms of numbers and popularity, rather than in terms of spirituality and truth. They were

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion: Ancient and Modern*, (Riverside, CA: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Asso., Inc., 1981), pp. 55-59; much of the data under this heading has been derived from Woodrow's excellent study.

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Constantine was not "baptized" until 337 A.D. after he fell sick unto death, some 25 years after his "vision". Some investigators have suspected that he had already expired prior to the baptism. Regardless, the officiating Bishop was Eusebius of Nicomedia, the champion of the Arian party (Moyer, *Who Was Who in Church History*, *op. cit.*, p. 137).

<sup>3</sup> Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion: Ancient and Modern*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

ready to compromise with the various "mysteries" in order to achieve those ends. This was especially true at Rome.

By adopting the cross as a symbol on the banners of his army, and having a transverse letter "X" (a Greek Chi) marked on the shields of his soldiers, Constantine hoped to establish unity among his troops. The apostate and/or worldly Christians would think they were fighting for the cross of Christ; the pagans had already been fighting for years under a standard bearing a mithraic cross of light.<sup>1</sup> The ploy worked and the battle at Milvian Bridge was won on 28 October, 312 A.D.

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<sup>1</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization. Caesar and Christ*, Vol. 3, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), p. 654. The X was also the symbol of the god Ham in Egypt: Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, *op. cit.*, p. 204.