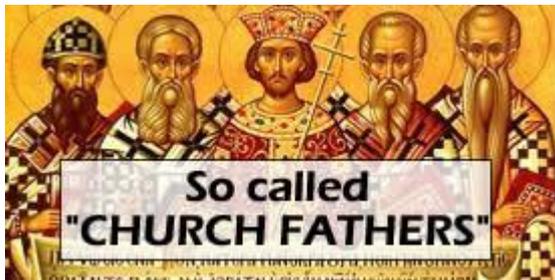


THE TRUTH ABOUT "CHURCH FATHERS", SUNDAY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Mention 'Church fathers' today and instead of people thinking of Jesus' apostles, or even God's Old Testament leaders and prophets, a lot of people point to the Roman Catholic 'fathers'. Do a search on the internet and instead of seeing the great names from the Bible, you will see names like Origen, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Augustine. But there is a big difference between the true 'church fathers', the apostles of Jesus Christ, and the later so called 'fathers' as named above.



The apostles of Christ and writers of the New Testament taught a simple gospel that is clearly revealed to all who will believe. But the so called 'church fathers' that many people look to today replaced the simplicity of the gospel message with a mysterious and hidden message that could only be interpreted by themselves and the leaders of the 'visible church'.

Many eminent theologians of Christian history speak against accepting the writings of the so called apostolic fathers with any authority.

To get an example of the kind of spirit that was driving these so called church fathers, you only need look at Augustine. Once, while addressing some non-Catholic monks from North Wales who would not bow to his and the Roman Church's requests, he shouted ... ***"if you will not join with us in unity, you shall from enemies suffer the vengeance of death."*** (Killen, The Old Catholic Church, p.276-7)

"A phenomenon singular in its kind, is the striking difference between the writings of the apostles and the writings of the apostolic fathers ... The writings of the so called apostolic fathers have unhappily, for the most part, come down to us in a condition very little worthy of confidence ... which aimed to crush the free spirit of the gospel." (Neander, General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Vol.1, p.657)

"To the common people, the principal truths of Christianity were explained in their purity and simplicity, and all subtleties were avoided; nor were weak and tender minds overloaded with a multitude of precepts. But in their schools, and in their books, the doctors who cultivated literature and philosophy and especially those of Egypt, deemed it elegant and

exquisite, to subject divine wisdom to the scrutiny of reason, or rather to bring under the precepts of their philosophy, and to examine metaphysically, the nature of the doctrines taught by Christ. At the head of this class of divines was Origen ... he maintained that under the things there expressed, there was contained a hidden and concealed sense, which was much to be preferred to the literal meaning. And this hidden sense it is that he searches after in his commentaries, ingeniously indeed, but perversely, and generally to the entire neglect and contempt to the literal meaning. Innumerable expositors in this and the following centuries pursued the method of Origen." (Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, BOOK I, CENTURY III, PART II, CHAP. III)

"If we turn to the fathers with the hope that now at last we shall enter the region of unimpeachable methods and certain applications, we shall be disappointed. I would earnestly ask not to be misunderstood ... There are but few of them whose pages are not rife with errors - errors of method, errors of fact, errors of history, of grammar, and even of doctrine ... The earliest fathers and apologists add little or nothing to our understanding of scripture ... We turn to them in vain for the justification of any claim to the possession of an infallible tradition." (Farrar, History of Interpretation, p.162-165)

"When God's Word is by the Fathers expounded, construed, and glossed, then, in my judgment, it is even as when one strains milk through a coal-sack, which must needs spoil and make the milk black; God's Word of itself is pure, clean, bright and clear; but, through the doctrines, books, and writings of the Fathers, it is darkened, falsified, and spoiled." (Martin Luther, Table Talk, p.228)

*"As to the fathers in general ... of these we may safely state, that there is not a truth in the most orthodox creed, that cannot be proved by their authority, nor a heresy that has disgraced the Romish Church, that may not challenge them as its abettors. **In points of doctrine, their authority is, with me, nothing. The Word of God alone contains my creed.**" (Adam Clarke, Commentary on Proverbs 8)*

It was Satan's desire to replace the clear, Divinely inspired writings of the prophets of God and apostles of Christ, with writings of men whom confused the clear gospel truth, and replaced them with 'mysteries' that only the Church leaders could interpret. This enabled Satan to lock the people up in a perpetual deception, causing them to look to 'church tradition' over the Word of God itself. And I have personally had this experience myself talking to pastors of so called EVANGELICAL churches. After showing them truths from God's Word, they would tell me ... "Ok, I will go and check my books [books of the 'church fathers'] to see what they say and get back to you" And these are pastors of **non** Roman Catholic churches!

SUNDAY AND EASTER OBSERVANCE

In the second century, the aims of the sun-worshipping emperors and those of the Alexandrian theologians ran parallel. There was an ambitious scheme being devised by Satan himself to blend all religions into one, of which "***the sun was to be the central object of adoration.***" (Milman, The History of Christianity, vol.II, p.175-176). Pagan philosophy had a big influence on the early church writers (also known as the 'church fathers'), which Schaff confirms in his book 'History of the Christian Church', vol.II ...

"We can trace it [Pagan Philosophy] in Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and even in Augustine, who confessed that it kindled in him an incredible fire." (Schaff, History of the Christian Church, 2d Period, vol. 2, par. 173)

The bishops of Rome approved the conciliating attitude between the pagan emperors and the mass methods of Alexandria's evangelism, and decided to eclipse any public attraction which pagan festivals could offer. Seated in the empire's capital, from the height of their pedestal of influence, they determined to bring together Easter, a yearly festival, and Sunday, a weekly holiday sacred to the worship of the sun, to make the greatest church festival of the year.

The controversy over Easter, which was to rage for centuries, now began. God had ordained that the Passover of the Old Testament should be celebrated in the spring of the year on the fourteenth day of the first Bible month.

Heathenism in the centuries before Christ had a counterfeit yearly holiday celebrating the spring equinox of the sun. It was called 'Eostre' from the Scandinavian word for the goddess of spring, which is where we get our word 'Easter'.

Since the resurrection of Christ had occurred at the time of the Old Testament Passover, a custom developed of celebrating it yearly, though neither Christ nor the New Testament provided for it. This rivaled the pagan spring festival. However, the fourteenth day of the month of the Passover **could fall, as now, on any day of the week.** The eastern churches celebrated the resurrection of Christ annually two days after the Passover feast. They commemorated the resurrection on whatever day of the week the sixteenth day of the month fell. This was in harmony with the way the Bible regulated the Old Testament Passover feast.

In addition to their yearly spring festival at Eastertime, sun worshipers also had a weekly festival holiday. As was previously pointed out, **the first day of the week had widespread recognition as being sacred to the sun.** The bishop of Rome, seeking to outrival pagan pomp, assaulted those churches which celebrated Easter as a movable feast. He determined to force Easter to come on the same day of the week each year, namely, Sunday. (*see Bower, The History of the Popes, vol. 1, p.18; also following quote*).

"The majority of bishops had (in the second century) decreed that the 'feast of the resurrection' could only be celebrated on a Sunday." (Hefele, History of the Christian Councils, vol. 1, pp. 300-313)

By this he would create a precedent which only a devout and scholarly opposition could expose. By this he would appeal to the popular prejudices of his age, **be they ever so incorrect.** By this he would claim to be the lord of the calendar, that instrument so indispensable to civilized nations. By this he would assert the right to appoint church festivals and holy days. By this he would confuse and perplex other church communions, more simple and scriptural than he. **Only those who have read carefully the history of the growth of papal power will ever know how powerfully the controversy concerning Easter and Sunday worship served in the hands of the bishops of Rome.**

Victor I, the bishop of Rome, assembled provincial synods up and down the Mediterranean coasts to come to an agreement on the date of Easter. Clement, at the head of the school of Alexandria, brought decision in favor of Rome's attitude by publishing a summary of traditions he had collected in favor of Sunday observance (*see Shotwell and Loomis, The See*

of Peter, page 276). **But there is no record of a writer daring to call Sunday 'the Lord's day' before Clement.** This Clement did.

At the same time Victor proclaimed Sunday to all the nations around the Mediterranean. **He knew that the pagans would agree** to a fixed yearly spring festival and that those Christians who were becoming worldly would do the same. Therefore, he issued his decree ordering the clergy everywhere to observe Easter on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox.

A lordly command issuing from one bishop over others was something new in the world. Christian clergy, up to that time, had their provincial synods. Generally, they had followed the decrees obtained by a majority vote in these regional gatherings. Never before Victor I, had any bishop dared to pass over the head of the provincial synods to command other clergy to obey his decrees. The shock was so astonishing and the resistance to it so pronounced that the historian Archibald Bower describes **this 'assumption of power' as the first essay of papal usurpation** (*see Bower, The History of the Popes, vol.1, p.18*).

The Church of the East answered the lordly requisition, declaring with great spirit and resolution that they would by no means depart from the custom handed down to them. Then the thunders of excommunication from the bishop of Rome began to roar. Victor, exasperated, broke communication with them, pronounced the clergy of the East unworthy of the name of brethren, and excluded them from all fellowship with the church at Rome (*see Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, b.1, cent.2, pt.2, ch. 4, par 11*). Here was a gulf created between the eastern and the western churches, a gulf which widened **as the bishop of Rome grew in power.**

And so the Papal Church of Rome is born. And through the scheming and brutal forces of Satan, she becomes the only VISIBLE church in the world for centuries to come, as God's true church is driven into the wilderness (Revelation 12:14).

Friend, this is why the vast majority of professed Christians in this world (Roman Catholic or not) observe Sunday as their weekly day of rest and day of worship. Even though there is no scriptural support for it whatsoever. This is why the WHOLE WORLD (Christian or not) observe 'Easter' on a Sunday every year. Even though there is no scriptural support for it at all.

Oh friend! Satan's final deception is soon to fall upon this world. His master plan of replacing God's seventh day sabbath, the **only** day which has ever been set apart for holy use, with SUN-day, a Pagan day of worshipping the sun, has captured the whole world! Please seek the truth and stand upon the truth in Jesus Christ.