



At the beginning of the 4th Century the Roman Emperor Constantine employed a man by the name of Eusebius to compile the only history of early Christianity that still exists today.

Constantine had just made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire and he needed a doctrine of One God, One Religion, to help solidate his claim of one empire, one emperor. Unfortunately Eusebius drew not only on facts, but also on myth, legend and his own imagination so as to please his emperor, and so 4th Century distortions have been passed on to us as fact.

This Christian emperor, who oversaw the creation of the Nicene creed that is still repeated in churches today, had his wife suffocated and his son murdered. He remained unbaptised until his deathbed so that he could continue his atrocities and yet still be guaranteed a place in heaven by being baptised at the last moment, in short he was a typical Roman emperor.

How then can we trust that we are being told the whole Truth?

Take the sign of the cross, is this image found in ancient pagan churches? Are there artefacts bearing the image of the pagan God Dionysus being crucified on a cross and are there no representations of the crucifixion of Jesus until the 5th Century?

The gospels themselves are not consistent in their telling of Jesus's death, according to Paul Jesus is hanged on a gibbet, and Peter, in the Acts of The Apostles states that he was hung from a tree. Even when the word cross is used it has been translated from the Greek word stau-ros, this word in classical Greek meant merely an upright stake, or pole not a cross.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica states "Various objects, dating from periods long anterior to the Christian era, have been found, marked with crosses of different designs, in almost every part of the old world. India, Syria, Persia and Egypt have all yielded numberless examples. The use of the cross as a religious symbol in pre-Christian times and among non-Christian peoples may probably be regarded as universal, and in very many cases it was connected with some form of nature worship." (1946, Vol. p.753) To the ancients the cross was a sacred symbol, the 4 elements of the physical world (fire, earth, water and air) were represented by its 4 arms. These 4 elements bound the 5th element, the spirit or soul, to its earthly materiality. The image of a man nailed to a 4 armed cross represented the predicament of the soul trapped in a physical body.

How would you feel if one of your dearest friends was executed on the basis of false charges? Would you make a replica of the instrument of execution? Would you cherish it, or would you rather shun it? The New Catholic Encyclopaedia admits "The representation of Christ's redemptive death on Golgotha does not occur in the symbolic art of the first Christian centuries." (1967, Vol. IV, p.486)

So is it the cross that we should be venerating and remembering, or The Christ?