

# THE CHRISTIAN CROSS

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In searching out the biblical understanding of what Yeshua (Jesus) was crucified on (the traditional Christian 't' cross), I have found that there is no biblical evidence for it, whether the small 't' cross, or the cross with the bar at the top (T). Criminals and such were sometimes crucified on a pole or a stake, with a cross piece to make it a 't,' for there are records of such in ancient literature, but the Greek word for the 'cross' that Jesus was crucified on gives us no biblical grounds for assuming that it had to be a 't' of any kind.

From the Greek New Testament, the word that our English Bibles translate as 'cross,' is a piece of wood that is a stake or a pole. Some times it's just called a tree (KJV: Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal. 3:13; 1st Pet. 2:24).

I have also come to see that the traditional Christian cross was taken from a sign of a pagan god. Its form or letter (T or t) symbolized Tammuz, the major pagan god of the ancient world. In *Vine's Dictionary*, under 'cross, crucify' it speaks of the 'cross' being a straight piece of wood and that it was adopted from a pagan god:

## *The Noun Stauros*

“*stauros* (σταυρος 4716) denotes, primarily, ‘an upright pale or stake.’ On such malefactors were nailed for execution. Both the noun and the verb *stauroo* σταυ’ροο, ‘to fasten to a stake or pale,’ are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two beamed ‘cross.’”

“The shape of the” traditional ‘t’ cross “had its origin in ancient Chaldea (Babylon) and was used as the symbol of the god Tammuz (being in the shape of the mystic Tau, the initial of his name) in that country and in adjacent lands, including Egypt.”

“By the middle of the 3rd century AD the churches had either departed from, or had travestied, certain doctrines of the Christian faith. In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system, pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and symbols. Hence the Tau or T, in its most frequent form, with the cross-piece lowered, was adopted to stand for the ‘cross’ of Christ.”

“As for the Chi or X” (in Greek) “which Constantine declared he had seen in a vision leading him to champion the Christian faith, that letter was the initial of the word ‘Christ’” (in Greek) “and had nothing to do with ‘the Cross’ (for *xulon*, a timber beam, a tree,’ as used for the *stauros*, see under TREE).”

“The method of execution was borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians. The *stauros* denotes (a) ‘the cross, or stake itself,’ e.g., Matthew 27:32; (b) ‘the crucifixion suffered,’ e.g., 1st Corinthians 1:17-18, where ‘the word of the cross,’ RV, stands for the gospel; Galatians 5:11, where crucifixion is metaphorically used of the renunciation of the world that characterizes the true Christian life; 6:12; 14; Ephesians

2:16; Philippians 3:18.”

“The judicial custom by which the condemned person carried his stake to the place of execution was applied by the Lord to those sufferings by which His faithful followers were to express their fellowship with Him, e.g., Matthew 10:38.”<sup>1</sup>

## *The Verbs*

- “*stauroo* (σταυροω, 4717) signifies (a) ‘the act of crucifixion,’ e.g., Matthew 20:19; (b) metaphorically, ‘the putting off of the flesh with its’ (carnal) ‘passions and lusts.’”
- “*sustauroo* (συσταυροω, 4957), ‘to crucify with is used (a) of actual ‘crucifixion’ in company with another, Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32; John 19:32; (b) metaphorically, of spiritual identification with Christ in His death, Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20.”<sup>2</sup>

In Bauer’s classical Greek lexicon, the word *stauros* (σταυρος) is, ‘in the sense’ an ‘upright, pointed stake.’<sup>3</sup> It goes on to tell us that at times there could be a cross-piece attached to it, but that this was not the case in all instances. It states,

‘a stake sunk into the earth in an upright position; a cross-piece was often...attached to its upper part, so that it was shaped like a T or thus t.’<sup>4</sup>

According to both Vine and Bauer there is nothing from the biblical word (or the Gospel accounts) that mean that the ‘cross,’ *stauros* (wooden pole) that the Lord was pierced to had to have a cross-piece with it.

The other Greek word that is sometimes translated as ‘cross’ in our English translations is ξυλον (*zulonone*). It appears in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal. 3:13 and 1st Peter 2:24. Other translations, more true to the literal meaning, have ‘tree’ (as I’ve noted above from the King James Version).

There is nothing inherent in the word that suggests that it has to be a ‘t.’ If anything, it conveys just the opposite meaning, that it was a single piece of wood. It means, ‘wood as building material...objects made of wood...the pole on which Moses raised the brass serpent...cross’ and ‘tree.’<sup>5</sup> Again, no solid evidence that what Yeshua was crucified on was the traditional ‘t.’

Alexander Hislop offers us a wonderful insight into the ‘cross’ that Constantine saw. It wasn’t the traditional church cross. That cross, as it is known today, was brought into the Church by the pseudo Christians of Egypt (who were more pagan than Christian). This ‘Christian cross’ had been in use for 1,500 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Hislop shows how deeply steeped in paganism and superstition it is.

The following is chapter from Hislop’s classic, *The Two Babylons*, on the cross:

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<sup>1</sup> E. W. Vine, *Vine’s Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (London, England: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 764.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

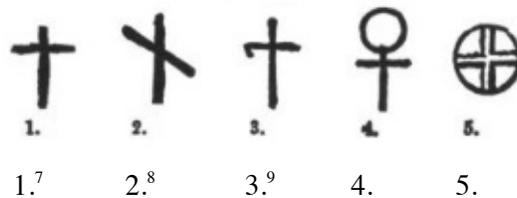
<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 549.

# THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

There is yet one more symbol of the Romish worship to be noticed and that is the sign of the cross.<sup>6</sup> In the Papal system, as is well known, the sign of the cross and the image of the cross are ‘all in all.’ No prayer can be said, no worship engaged in, no step almost can be taken without the frequent use of the sign of the cross. The cross is looked upon as the grand charm, as the great refuge in every season of danger, in every hour of temptation as the infallible preservative from all the powers of darkness. The cross *is adored with all the homage due only to the Most High*, and for anyone to call it, in the hearing of a genuine Romanist, by the Scriptural term, ‘the accursed tree,’ is a mortal offence.

To say that such superstitious feeling for the sign of the cross, such worship as Rome pays to a wooden or a metal cross, ever grew out of the saying of Paul, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ’—that is, in the *doctrine of Christ crucified*—is a mere absurdity, a shallow subterfuge and pretence. The magic virtues attributed to the so-called sign of the cross, the worship bestowed on it, never came from such a source.

Figure 43



The same sign of the cross that Rome now worships was used in the Babylonian Mysteries, was applied by Paganism to the same magic purposes, was honoured with the same honours. That which is now called the Christian cross was originally no Christian emblem at all, but was the mystic Tau of the Chaldeans and Egyptians—the true original form of the letter T—the *initial* of the name of Tammuz—which in Hebrew, radically the same as ancient Chaldee, was found on coins, was formed, as in No. 1 of the accompanying woodcut (Fig. 43); and in Etrurian and Coptic, as in Nos. 2 and 3. That mystic Tau was *marked in baptism* on the foreheads of those *initiated in the Mysteries*,<sup>10</sup> and was used in every variety of way as a most sacred symbol. To identify Tammuz with the sun it was joined sometimes to the circle of the sun, as in No. 4; sometimes it was *inserted* in the circle, as in No. 5.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, 2nd American ed. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959), p. 197.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., note \*: Kitto, *Biblical Cyclopaedia*, vol. i. p. 495.

Avram: The ‘accursed tree’ that Hislop speaks of is found in Gal. 3:13, which Paul saw from Dt. 21:22-23; see also Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; 1st Peter 2:24.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., note †: Sir W. Betham, *Etruria*, vol. i. p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., note ‡: Bunsen, *Egypt*, vol. i. p. 450.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 198, note \*: Tertullian, *De Proscript. Hoeret.*, cap. 40, vol. ii. p. 54 and note. The language of Tertullian implies that those who were initiated by baptism in the Mysteries were marked on the forehead in the same way as his Christian countrymen in Africa, who had begun by this time to be marked in baptism with the sign of the cross.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., note †: Stephen, *Central America*, vol. ii. p. 344, Plate 2.

Whether the Maltese cross, which the Romish bishops append to their names as a symbol of their episcopal dignity, is the letter T, may be doubtful, but there seems no reason to doubt that that Maltese cross is an express symbol of the sun, for Layard found it as a sacred symbol in Nineveh in such a connection as led him to identify it with the sun.<sup>12</sup> The mystic Tau, as the symbol of the great divinity, was called ‘the sign of life,’ it was used as an amulet over the heart;<sup>13</sup> it was marked on the official garments of the priests, as on the official garments of the priests of Rome; it was borne by kings in their hand as a token of their dignity or divinely-conferred authority.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 44



The Vestal virgins of Pagan Rome wore it suspended from their necklaces, as the nuns do now.<sup>15</sup> The Egyptians did the same, and many of the barbarous nations with whom they had intercourse, as the Egyptian monuments bear witness. In reference to the adorning of some of these tribes, Wilkinson thus writes:

‘The girdle was sometimes highly ornamented, men as well as women wore earrings and they frequently had a *small cross* suspended to a necklace or to the collar of their dress. The adoption of this last was not peculiar to them; it was also appended to, or figured upon, the robes of the Rot-n-no, and traces of it may be seen in the fancy ornaments of the Rebo, showing that it was already in use as early as the fifteenth century *before* the Christian era.’<sup>16</sup>

There is hardly a Pagan tribe where the cross has not been found. The cross was worshipped by the Pagan Celts long before the incarnation and death of Christ.<sup>17</sup> ‘It is a fact,’ says Maurice,

‘not less remarkable than well-attested, that the Druids in their groves were accustomed to select the most stately and beautiful tree as an emblem of the Deity they adored, and having cut the side branches they affixed two of the largest of them to the highest part of the trunk in such a manner that those branches extended on each side like the arms of a man, and together with the body, presented the appearance of a *huge cross*, and on the bark in several places was also inscribed the letter Thau.’<sup>18</sup>

It was worshipped in Mexico for ages before the Roman Catholic missionaries set foot there, large stone crosses being erected probably to the ‘god of rain.’<sup>19</sup> The cross thus widely worshipped, or regarded as a sacred emblem, was the unequivocal symbol of Bacchus, the Babylonian Messiah, for he was represented with a head-band covered with crosses (see Fig. 45).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., note †: Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 211; *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. ii. p. 446.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., note §: Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 365, Plate.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., note ll: See Woodcut of King in next Chapter, p. 214; in *The Full Hislop* it’s p. 169.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., note ¶: Pere Lafitan, *Maeurs des Sauvages Ameriquains*, vol. i. p. 442.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 199, note \*: Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 376.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., note †: Crabb, *Mythology*, p. 163.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., note †: Maurice, *Indian Antiquities*, vol. vi. p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., note §: Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, vol. i. p. 242.

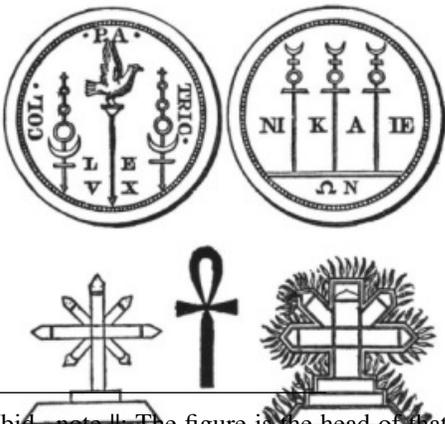


Figure 45

This symbol of the Babylonian god is revered at this day in all the wide wastes of Tartary where Buddhism prevails and the way in which it is represented among them forms a striking commentary on the language applied by Rome to the Cross. 'The cross,' says Colonel Wilford in the *Asiatic Researches*,

'though not an object of *worship* among the Baud'has or Buddhists, is a favourite emblem and device among them. It is exactly the cross of the Manicheans, with leaves and flowers springing from it. This cross, putting forth leaves and flowers (and fruit also, as I am told) is called the divine tree, the tree of the gods, the tree of life and knowledge, and productive of whatever is good and desirable, and is placed in the terrestrial paradise'<sup>21</sup> (see Fig. 46).

Figure 46<sup>22</sup>



Compare this with the language of Rome applied to the cross and it will be seen how exact is the coincidence. In the Office of the Cross it is called the 'Tree of life,' and the worshippers are taught thus to address it:

'Hail, Oh Cross, triumphal wood, true salvation of the world; among trees there is none like you in leaf, flower, and bud...Oh Cross, our only hope, increase righteousness to the godly and pardon the offences of the guilty.'<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., note ¶: The figure is the head of that which is given in p. 48, *ante* (in *The Full Hislop* it's Figure 22 on p. 36), only magnified, that the crosses may be more distinctly visible. Let the reader turn back from this point and read over again what is said in p. 154 (in *The Full Hislop* it's p. 119f.) about the worship at Rome on Good Friday on the 'cross of fire,' and the full significance of that worship will now appear.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 200, note \*: Wilford, *Asiatic Researches*, vol. x. p. 124.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., note †: The two at the top are the Standards of Pagan barbarous nations of the East (Bryant, *Mythology*, vol. iii. p. 327). The *black* one in the middle is, 'The sacred Egyptian Tau or Sign of Life' (Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. v. p. 283). The two lowest are Buddhist Crosses (Wilford, *Asiatic Researches*, vol. x. p. 124).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., note ‡: *Reviw of Epistle of Dr. Gentianus Harvet of Louvaine*, p. 251, A. The following is one of the stanzas of the above hymn in the originals:

'Oh crux, lignum triumphale  
Mundi vera salus, vale,  
Inter ligna nullum tale  
Fronde, flore, germine.'

The above was actually versified by the Romanisers in the Church of England, and published along with much besides from the same source, some years ago, in a volume entitled *Devotions of the Passion*. The *London Record* of April 1842 gave the following as a specimen of the 'Devotions' provided by these 'wolves in sheep's clothing' for members of the Church of England:

'Oh faithful cross, you peerless tree,  
No forest yields the like of thee;

Can anyone, reading the gospel narrative of the crucifixion, possibly believe that that narrative of itself could ever germinate into such extravagance of ‘leaf, flower, and bud,’ as thus appears in this Roman Office? When it is considered that the Buddhist, like the Babylonian cross, was the recognised emblem of Tammuz, who was known as the mistletoe branch, or ‘All-heal,’ then it is easy to see how the sacred Initial should be represented as covered with leaves, and how Rome, in adopting it, should call it the,

‘Medicine which preserves the healthful, heals the sick, and does what mere human power alone could never do.’<sup>24</sup>

Now, this Pagan symbol seems first to have crept into the Christian Church in Egypt, and generally, into Africa. A statement of Tertullian, about the middle of the third century, shows how much by that time, the Church of Carthage was infected with the old leaven.<sup>25</sup> Egypt, especially, which was never thoroughly evangelised, appears to have taken the lead in bringing in this Pagan symbol. The first form of that which is called the *Christian Cross*, found on *Christian* monuments there, is the unequivocal Pagan Tau or Egyptian ‘Sign of life.’ Let the reader peruse the following statement of Sir G. Wilkinson:

‘A more curious fact may be mentioned respecting this hieroglyphical character [the Tau] that the early Christians of Egypt adopted it in lieu of the cross, which was *afterwards* substituted for it, prefixing it to inscriptions in the same manner as the cross in *later times*. For, though Dr. Young had some scruples in believing the statement of Sir A. Edmonstone, that it holds that position in the sepulchres of the great Oasis, I can attest that such is the case, and that numerous inscriptions, headed by the *Tau*, are preserved to the present day on early Christian monuments.’<sup>26</sup>

The drift of this statement is evidently this; that in Egypt the earliest form of that which has since been *called* the cross, was no other than the ‘Crux Ansata’ or ‘Sign of life’ borne by Osiris and all the Egyptian gods. That the *ansa* or ‘handle’ was afterwards dispensed with, and that it became the simple Tau, or ordinary cross as it appears at this day, and that the design of its first employment on the sepulchres, therefore, could have no reference to the crucifixion of the Nazarene, but was simply the result of the attachment to old and long-cherished Pagan symbols, which is always strong in those who, with the adoption of the Christian name and profession are, to a large extent, Pagan in heart and feeling. This, and this only, is the origin of the worship of the ‘cross.’

This, no doubt, will appear all very strange and very incredible to those who have read Church history, as most have done to a large extent, even amongst Protestants, through Romish spectacles, and especially to those who call to mind the famous story told of the miraculous appearance of the cross to Constantine on the day before the decisive victory at the Milvian bridge that decided the fortunes of avowed Paganism and nominal Christianity. That story, as commonly told, if true, would certainly give a divine sanction to the reverence for the cross, but that story, when sifted to the bottom, according to the common version of it, will be found to be based on a delusion—a delusion, however, into which so good a man as Milner has allowed himself to fall. Milner’s account is as follows:

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Leaf, flower and bud.

Sweet is the wood and sweet the weight,  
And sweet the nails that penetrate  
You, you sweet wood.’

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 201, note \*: From hymn already quoted.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., note †: Tertullian, *De Corona Militis*, cap. iii., vol. ii. p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., note ‡: Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. v. p. 283-284.

“Constantine, marching from France into Italy against Maxentius, in an expedition which was likely either to exalt or to ruin him, was oppressed with anxiety. Some god he thought needful to protect him, the God of the Christians he was most inclined to respect, but he wanted some satisfactory proof of His real existence and power, and he neither understood the means of acquiring this, nor could he be content with the atheistic indifference in which so many generals and heroes since his time have acquiesced.”

“He prayed, he implored with such vehemence and importunity, and God left him not unanswered. While he was marching with his forces in the afternoon, the trophy of the cross appeared very luminous in the heavens, brighter than the sun, with this inscription, ‘Conquer by this.’ He and his soldiers were astonished at the sight, but he continued pondering on the event until night. And Christ appeared to him when asleep with the same sign of the cross and directed him to make use of the symbol as his military ensign.”<sup>27</sup>

Such is the statement of Milner. Now, in regard to the ‘trophy of the cross,’ a few words will suffice to show that it is utterly unfounded. I do not think it necessary to dispute the fact of some miraculous sign having been given. There may or there may not have been on this occasion a *dignus vindice nodus*, a crisis worthy of a divine interposition. Whether, however, there was anything out of the ordinary course, I do not inquire, but this I say, on the *supposition* that Constantine in this matter acted in good faith, and that there actually *was* a miraculous appearance in the heavens; that it was not the sign of the cross that was seen, but quite a different thing, the *name* of Christ. That this was the case we have at once the testimony of Lactantius, who was the tutor of Constantine’s son Crispus—the earliest author who gives any account of the matter, and the indisputable evidence of the standards of Constantine themselves, as handed down to us on medals struck at the time. The testimony of Lactantius is most decisive:

‘Constantine was warned in a dream to make the celestial sign of God upon his soldiers’ shields, and so to join battle. He did as he was bid and with the transverse letter X circumflecting the head of it, he marks *Christ* on their shields. Equipped with this sign his army takes the sword.’<sup>28</sup>

The letter X was just the *initial* of the *name* of Christ, being equivalent in Greek to CH. If, therefore, Constantine did as he was bid, when he made ‘the celestial sign of God’ in the form of ‘the letter X,’ it was that ‘letter X,’ as the symbol of *Christ*, and *not* the sign of the cross, which he saw in the heavens.

When the Labarum, or far-famed standard of Constantine itself, properly so called, was made, we have the evidence of Ambrose, the well-known Bishop of Milan, that that standard was formed on the very principle contained in the statement of Lactantius—viz. simply to display the Redeemer’s name. He calls it ‘Labarum, hoc est Christi sacratum nomine signum’<sup>29</sup>—The Labarum, that is, the ensign consecrated by the *name* of Christ.<sup>30</sup> There is not the slightest allusion to any cross—to anything, but the simple name of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 202, note \*: *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 41. Milner refers to Eusebius, *Constantine*, xvii, but this is an error. It is *De Vita Constantine*, lib. i. cap. 28-29, p. 173.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., note †: Lactantius, *De mortibus Persecutorum*, 44, pp. 565-566. The exact words of Lactantius are as follows: ‘Commonitus est in quiete Constantineus, ut caeleste signum Dei notaret in scutis, atque ita praelium committeret. Fecit ut jussus est et transversa X litera summo capite circumflexo, Christum scutis notat. Quo signo armatus exercitus capit ferrum.’

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 203, note \*: *Ambrosii Opera*, vol. iv. p. 327.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., note †: *Epistle of Ambrose to the Emperor Theodosius about the proposal to restore the Pagan altar of Victory in the Roman Senate*. The subject of the Labarum has been much confused through ignorance of the meaning of the word. Bryant *assumes* (and I was myself formerly led away by the assumption) that it was applied to the standard bearing the crescent and the cross, but he produces no evidence for the assumption, and I

Christ.

While we have these testimonies of Lactantius and Ambrose, when we come to examine the standard of Constantine, we find the accounts of both authors fully borne out; we find that that standard bearing on it these very words, *'Hoc signo victor eris...In this sign you will be a conqueror,'* said to have been addressed from heaven to the emperor, has nothing at all in the shape of a cross, but 'the letter X.' In the Roman Catacombs, on a Christian monument to 'Sinphonia and her sons,' there is a distinct allusion to the story of the vision, but that allusion also shows that the X, and not the cross, was regarded as the 'heavenly sign.' The words at the head of the inscription are these:

"In Hoc Vinces<sup>31</sup>  
X"

Nothing, whatever, but the X is here given as the 'Victorious Sign.' There are some examples, no doubt, of Constantine's standard, in which there is a cross-bar from which the flag is suspended that contains that 'letter X,'<sup>32</sup> and Eusebius, who wrote when superstition and apostacy were working, tries hard to make it appear that that cross-bar was the essential element in the ensign of Constantine, but this is obviously a mistake; that cross-bar was nothing new, nothing peculiar to Constantine's standard. Tertullian shows<sup>33</sup> that that cross-bar was found long before on the *vexillum*, the Roman Pagan standard that carried a flag, and it was used simply for the purpose of displaying that flag. If, therefore, that cross-bar was the 'celestial sign,' it needed no voice from heaven to direct Constantine to make it, nor would the making or displaying of it have excited any particular attention on the part of those who saw it.

We find no evidence at all that the famous legend, 'In this overcome,' has any reference to this cross-bar, but we find evidence the most decisive that that legend does refer to the X. Now, that that X was not intended as the sign of the cross, but as the initial of Christ's name, is manifest from this; that the Greek P, equivalent to our R, is inserted in the middle of it, making by their union CHR. Anyone who pleases may satisfy himself of this by examining the plates given in Mr. Elliot's *Horae Apocalypticae*.<sup>34</sup>

The standard of Constantine, then, was just the *name* of Christ. Whether the device came from earth or from heaven—whether it was suggested by human wisdom or divine, supposing that Constantine was sincere in his Christian profession, nothing more was implied in it than a literal embodiment of the sentiment of the Psalmist, 'In the *name* of the Lord will we display our banners' (Ps. 20:5). To display that name on the standards of Imperial Rome was a thing absolutely new, and the sight of that *name*, there can be little doubt, nerved the Christian soldiers in Constantine's army with more than usual fire to fight and conquer at the Milvian bridge.

In the above remarks I have gone on the supposition that Constantine acted in good faith as a Christian. His good faith, however, has been questioned,<sup>35</sup> and I am not without my suspicions that the X *may* have

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am now satisfied that none can be produced. The name Labarum, which is generally believed to have come from the East, treated as an Oriental word, gives forth its meaning at once. It evidently comes from *Lab*, 'to vibrate' or 'move to and fro,' and *ar* 'to be active.' Interpreted thus, Labarum signifies simply a banner or flag 'waving to and fro' in the wind, and this entirely agrees with the language of Ambrose 'an *ensign* consecrated by the *name* of Christ,' which implies a banner.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., note ‡: 'In this you shall overcome.'

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., note §: Dr. Maitland, *Church in the Catacombs*, p. 169.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., note ll: *Apologeticus Adv. Gentes*, cap. 16, vol. i. pp. 368-369.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 204, note \*: Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticae*, vol. i. pp. 226, 240.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., note †: By Gavazzi, in his publication entitled *The Free World*.

been intended to have one meaning to the Christians and another to the Pagans. It is certain that the X was the symbol of the god Ham in Egypt, and as such was exhibited on the breast of his image.<sup>36</sup> Whichever view be taken, however, of Constantine's sincerity, the supposed divine warrant for reverencing the sign of the cross entirely falls to the ground. In regard to the X there is no doubt that, by the Christians who knew nothing of secret plots or devices, it was generally taken, as Lactantius declares, as equivalent to the name of *Christ*. In this view, therefore, it had no very great attractions for the Pagans, who, even in worshipping Horus, had always been accustomed to make use of the mystic tau or cross as the 'sign of life' or the magical charm that secured all that was good and warded off everything that was evil.

When, therefore, multitudes of the Pagans, on the conversion of Constantine, flocked into the Church, like the semi-Pagans of Egypt, they brought along with them their predilection for the old symbol. The consequence was, that in no great length of time, as apostacy proceeded, the X, which in itself was not an unnatural symbol of Christ the true Messiah, and which had once been regarded as such, was allowed to go entirely into disuse, and the Tau, the sign of the cross, the indisputable sign of Tammuz the false Messiah, was everywhere substituted in its stead. Thus, by the 'sign of the cross,' Christ has been crucified anew by those who profess to be His disciples. Now, if these things be matter of historic fact, who can wonder that, in the Romish Church 'the sign of the cross' has always and everywhere been seen to be such an instrument of rank superstition and delusion?<sup>37</sup>

## THE SERPENT ON THE POLE

In the Great News that John wrote, Yeshua speaks of the Himself being lifted up (crucified) as Moses lifted up the serpent on the bronze pole (ca. 1410 BC). It seems that the Lord, from the biblical account, was pierced to an upright stake or wooden pole with no crossbar:

'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.' (John 3:14)

'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.' (John 12:32)

As the Lord Yeshua implies, it is not the instrument of death that is to become our focus or symbol, but He Himself crucified. The primary action of the verses point to the Lord's hanging between the Heavens and the Earth, that is to say, His death, but the secondary point suggests that the shape of the wood that would be used, would be like the one Moses made, which was only a pole (Num. 21:8-9). Benjamin Davidson's *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* lists the Hebrew word for what the bronze serpent was to be placed upon is *nays* נַיִם which means a 'pole, Nu. 21:8, 9.'<sup>38</sup>

*The Hebrew and English Lexicon of Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius* also affirms this, stating that it's

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., note †: See Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. vi., 'Khem.'

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 205, note \*: If the above remarks be well founded, surely it cannot be right that this sign of the cross or emblem of Tammuz should be used in Christian baptism. At the period of the Revolution, a Royal Commission, appointed to inquire into the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, numbering among its members eight or ten bishops, strongly recommended that the use of the cross, as tending to superstition, should be laid aside. If such a recommendation was given then, and that by such authority as members of the Church of England must respect, how much ought that recommendation to be enforced by the new light which Providence has cast on the subject!

<sup>38</sup> Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 553.

a ‘pole, supporting’ a ‘serpent of bronze...Nu 21:8-9.’<sup>39</sup> Both authorities specifically cite Num. 21:8-9 for the ‘pole.’ Also, no less of an authority than C. F. Keil believes it was only a pole (and not a standard Christian cross).<sup>40</sup>

## THE CHURCH AND THE CROSS

As Hislop brought out, the cross that the church uses has become the symbol to represent Jesus and has come to be revered or worshipped by hundreds of millions of people. Even when people say they don’t ‘worship’ the cross, they usually have an emotional attachment to it, something that cannot be biblically justified or defended.

When Hezekiah became king (ca. 724 BC) he destroyed the pole on which Moses had placed the bronze serpent (2nd Kings 18:1-6). Why? The people had been burning incense to it! They were ‘worshipping’ God that way about 700 years after Moses had made it. Most Christians who wear the cross as jewelry, or have it in their homes, or in their churches, will tell you that they have that symbol there to remind them of Jesus, but there is no biblical connection between Jesus and the ‘t’ cross. One has to make a mighty leap of presumption to say with certainty that what Yeshua was crucified on was the traditional ‘t’ cross. Of course, the Apostles would have known exactly what the Romans used to humiliate Yeshua on, but none of them saw fit to describe it for us, other than by using the words that we have already covered. Now, can you imagine someone offering a gold cross (or even a gold pole) to the Apostle Peter to wear around his neck? His Friend, His King, had been pierced to ‘it.’ He saw and felt all the horror of Yeshua’s death. He probably would not have appreciated its symbolic significance.

What if the Lord had died in an electric chair? Would every church have an electric chair where they now have their crosses? Big electric chairs, little electric chairs, wooden electric chairs and metal electric chairs. Diamond studded electric chairs and gold plated electric chairs. Homes would be adorned with miniature electric chairs. Perhaps some churches and homes would have a full scale model that one could sit in and meditate on the death of Christ? There might even be some models that came with a small electric current so that while meditating on it one would come to feel some experiential identification with how Christ died, and of course, to make sure that they didn’t fall asleep while meditating on His sufferings.

This all seems rather silly, far fetched and even laughable because the Messiah didn’t die in an electric chair, but hasn’t what the Church has done with the cross, similar? Taking a known, idolatrous symbol, and saying that it represents the Messiah of Israel is scripturally unsound and morally offensive. The cross was a pagan symbol before Christ, and that hasn’t changed. It is still a pagan symbol. Are we to out-do the pagans in their symbols when we can’t be sure that Christ actually died on a ‘t’ cross?

Yahveh declares that He doesn’t want to be worshipped the way the pagans worship their gods,<sup>41</sup> or to

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<sup>39</sup> Dr. Francis Brown, Dr. S. R. Driver, Dr. Charles A. Briggs, based on the lexicon of Professor Wilhelm Gesenius; Edward Robinson, Translator and E. Rodiger, Editor, *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1978), p. 651.

<sup>40</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament: The Pentateuch*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001; originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1866-91), p. 746.

<sup>41</sup> Deut. 12:28-32: “Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, in order that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of Yahveh your God. When Yahveh your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dis-

have graven<sup>42</sup> or wooden symbols<sup>43</sup> to represent Him. He wants us to do what is right in His eyes, not ours.<sup>44</sup> There is also the admonition to not let anyone entice us into going after other gods and worshiping them (Deut. 13:1-6ff). The Lord says that even if a (false) prophet's words come true, about whatever it is he spoke, the Lord commands His people to stone him, and says that He was testing His people Israel:

“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’ — which you have not known— ‘and let us serve them,’ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for Yahveh your God is testing you to find out if you love Yahveh your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Dt. 13:3)

There is much that we have to learn and unlearn that the Church has taught us, and the ‘cross’ seems to be one of them.

## *Miscellaneous*

Setting the paganism of the cross aside, I have some questions for those who wear the ‘Christian cross.’ If we are not sure, if we are not positively certain that it was a ‘t’ that Jesus was pierced to, how can we use it to symbolize Him? By what authority can one take the ‘t’ and use it to symbolize or represent Jesus? This is a question of spiritual authority. We get spiritual authority from the Scriptures, the Word of God. It would seem that the only authority one has for the traditional ‘Christian cross’ is the Roman Catholic Church’s tradition of using it. This is no biblical authority for it. The cross is the pagan symbol for the anti-Christ, first seen in Tammuz, the god of the Babylonians. How can one wear the cross and still be an example of Jesus?

Even if we were certain that it was a ‘t,’ how can we use it if God does not direct us to? For instance, in the Torah (Law of Moses) the Lord directs Israel to make the Tent of Meeting (the Tabernacle). Everything in there is minutely described in detail—the Ark, the Menorah (seven branched oil Lamp), etc. Where in the New Testament do any of the writers speak of making and using a cross to symbolize Yeshua? What I am speaking of here is spiritual authority. Whose rules do we follow, Satan’s or God’s?

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possess them and dwell in their land, beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?’ You must not behave thus toward Yahveh your God, for every abominable act which Yahveh hates they have done for their gods. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do. You must not add to, nor take away from it.”

<sup>42</sup> Exodus 20:4: ‘You must not make for yourself an idol.’

Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, p. 628-629. The Hebrew word for ‘idol’ is פֶּסֶל (*pesel*) and means a ‘carved image or idol,’ on wood, as the verb means, ‘to carve wood...also for a molten image.’

<sup>43</sup> Deut. 12:3: ‘you must break down their altars and you must smash their sacred stones and their Asherah poles you must burn in the fire and the idols of their gods you must cut down.’ The Asherah poles were made of wood.

<sup>44</sup> Deut. 12:8: ‘You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes.’ Deut. 13:18: ‘if you will listen to the voice of Yahveh your God, keeping all His commandments which I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of Yahveh your God.’ Judges 17:6: ‘In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.’ Prov. 12:15: ‘The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.’

We can make anything symbolize anything we want<sup>45</sup> but if it's to have God's authority, it must come from His Word; it must come from the Scriptures. This, and the fact that the cross is very pagan, is cause for concern.

Someone might say that the Confederate Flag had a great purpose at one time and now has fallen into disuse with the KKK. My concern with this application, in using it to justify the pagan cross, now taken over by the people of God, is that the Confederate Flag was never given by God. It never had a divine base to start with.

Taking things of the Devil and using them for godly things has been done with things like melodies for songs, but the original melody was not the Devil's to begin with. The cross was used by Satan since the beginning in Babylon. It is not a neutral object.

My own people, as well as many Christians, are enamored with the Star of David, but where in Scripture does God give Israel the Star of David? To the Jewish people, and others, it symbolizes the Jewish people, but it is not a biblical symbol of the Jewish people because it has no divine basis. Man can take and pervert things of God, but with the Bible we know what is perverted and what is not. The God of Israel has never given us the Catholic cross or the so called Star of David.<sup>46</sup>

Joshua served Yahveh the way that Yahveh wanted him to serve Him. We may not be able to reform 'the Church' or our Christian neighbor, but as Joshua once said,

'If it seems evil to you to serve Yahveh, choose this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell, but as for me and my House, we will serve Yahveh.' (Joshua 24:15)

Serving Yahveh has always been seen as doing what He desires for us to do, serving Him His Way, not ours or Satan's way.

## CONCLUSION

Both Vine and Bauer revealed that the primary meaning of the Greek word translated as 'cross' in our English Bibles means an upright pole or stake. Hislop spoke of the standard 't' cross of Christianity as originating in paganism 1,500 years before the Lord was born in Bethlehem of Judah, and that Constantine's miraculous vision wasn't of a traditional cross, but of the first Greek letter in the term Christ. With Yeshua speaking of being lifted up as Moses did with the serpent in the Wilderness, it also points to his crucifixion being on an upright wooden post. Therefore, there is no reasonable evidence to suggest that the 'cross' that the Lord was crucified on had to be the traditional 't,' and that we should associate Yeshua with it.

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<sup>45</sup> For instance, the common logos for business companies are associated with those companies because they have made them to represent their companies (e.g. the Pepsi Cola symbol and the Mercedes symbol, etc.).

<sup>46</sup> For those of you who think that I might be coming down too hard on this issue, and that, as a Jew, I don't 'understand' the emotional significance that one might have for 'the cross,' I 'give no slack' to those who wear the so-called Star of David, either, because it's also pagan (and I used to use it myself). See *The Star of David* at <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Star-of-David.pdf>.

## ***TO THE JEW FIRST?***

Christians should be an instrument of God's reconciliation and mercy to the Jewish people (Rom. 9-12:2). The Apostle Paul speaks of this priority when he declares:

'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek' (Rom. 1:16).

The most offensive symbol to a Jew is the cross. Not because Jesus died on 'it,' but because more Jews have been murdered in the shadow of the cross than all other symbols combined.<sup>47</sup> When a well meaning Christian wears a cross in the presence of a Jew, they being very insensitive to the Jewish person. The Apostle Paul says in Romans:

'For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died' (Rom. 14:15).

'It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles' (Rom. 14:21).

If the Apostle was that adamant in relation to meat and drink, how much more so would he have been to being sensitive to the Jewish people that he was ready to die for?<sup>48</sup>

The 'cross' is a major stumbling block to reaching the Jewish people. Most Christians who display the cross aren't aware of this side of the history of the Church, in relation to the Jewish people, but are walking in something that they believe truly represents their Savior. To possess the genuine faith of the Apostles we must strive to understand the Lord Yeshua and the Scriptures as they did. As we walk with Him we will come to know the Truth and the Truth will set us free (John 8:31-32). Glory be to Messiah Yeshua!

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<sup>47</sup> For a documented account of Christianity's relationship to the Jewish people over the last 1800 years, and how the cross has come to mean death to the Jewish people, one only need open any paperback history of the Jews, and read from the time of Jesus. I suggest Max Dimont's, *God, Jews and History*, and read from the crucifixion on.

<sup>48</sup> Paul says in Rom 9:1-3: 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.'

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*The Star of David* at <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Star-of-David.pdf>.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> This article was revised on 1 April 2016.