

# **Was Christ Crucified on a Cross?**

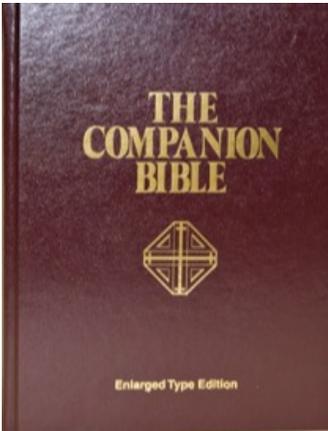


**By  
Willie Martin**

# Was Christ Crucified on a Cross?

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**T**HERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL PEOPLE TO QUESTION ME about my use of the word "stake" and not the "Cross" that Christ was crucified on. When all the churches, even the Catholic church uses the cross as the thing that Christ was crucified upon. Well I am not the only one that believes that He was crucified on a stake and not a cross as the following from the Companion Bible relates:—



## The Cross and Crucifixion

In the Greek New Testament two words are used for "the cross," on which the Lord was put to death.

- 1). The word "*stauros*"; which denotes an upright pale or stake, to which the criminals were mailed for execution.
- 2). The word "*xulon*," which generally denotes a piece of a dead log of wood, or timber, for fuel or for any other purpose. It is not like "*dendron*," which is used of a living, or green tree, as in Matthew 21:8; Revelation 7:1, 3; 8:7; 9:4.

As this latter word "*xulon*" is used for the former "*stauros*," it shows us that the meaning of each is exactly the same.

The verb "*stauroō*" means to drive stakes. (There are two compounds of it used: *sustauroō* to put any one thus to death with another (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32; John 19:32; Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20); and *anastauroō* to raise up and fix upon the stake again (Hebrews 6:6). Another word used is equally significant; *prosp gnumi* to fix or fasten anything (Acts 2:23)

Our English word "cross" is the translation of the Latin crux; but the Greek stauros no more means a crux than the word "stick" means a "crutch."

Homer uses the word stauros of an ordinary pole or state, or a single piece of timber. (Iliad xxiv. 453, Odyssey, xiv.11) And this is the meaning and usage of the word throughout the Greek classics. (e.g. Thucydides iv. 90. Xenophon, Anabasis v.2.21)

It never means two pieces of timber placed across one another at any angle, but always of one piece alone. Hence the use of the word "xulon" (No. 2, above) in connection with the manner of our Lord's death, and rendered "tree" in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 18:22; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24. This is preserved in our old English name "rood," or "rod." See the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th (Camb.) Ed., vol. 7, p. 505d.

There is nothing in the Greek of the New Testament even to imply two pieces of timber.

The latter "chi," X, the initial of the word Christ (X), was originally used for His Name; or x. This was superseded by the symbols (as multi-pointed star with a P inscribed over it) and (a tall cross with a P on top of it) and even the first of these had four "equal" arms.

These crosses were used as symbols of the Babylonian sun-god (a circle with a cross in it), and are first seen on a coin of Julius Caesar, 100-44 B.C., and then on a coin struck by Caesar's heir (Augustus) 20 B.C. (Other coins with this symbols were struck by Augustus, also by Hadrain and other Roman emperors. See Early Christian Numismatics, by C.W. King, M.A.)

On the coins of Constantine the most frequent symbol is (the multi-pointed star with the P inserted in the centre of it); but the same symbol is used without the surrounding circle, and with the four equal arms vertical and horizontal; and this was the symbol specially venerated as the "Solar Wheel." It should be stated that Constantine was a sun-god worshiper, and would not enter the "church" till some quarter of a century after the legend of his having seen such a cross in the heavens. (Eusebus, Vil. Const. I.37)

The evidence is the same as to the pre-Christian (phallic) symbol in Asia, Africa, and Eghypt, whether we consult Nineveh by Sir A. H. Layard (ii.213), or Manners and Customs of the Ancient Eghyptisans, by Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, iii. pp. 24, 26, 43, 44, 46, 52, 82, 136.

Dr. Schliemann gives the same evidence in his Llois (1880), recording his discoveries on the site of prehistoric Troy. See pp. 337, 350, 353, 521, 523.

Dr. Max Ohneflach Bichter gives the same evidence from Cyprus; and these are "the oldest extant Phoenician inscriptions;" see his Kypros, the Bible and Homer: Oriental Civilization, Art., and Religion in Ancient Times. Plates xix, xxv, xxvi, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xi, lvii, lxix.

The Catacombs in Rome bear the same testimony "Christ" is never represented there as "hanging on a corss," and the cross itself is only portrayed in a veiled and hesitating manner. N the Egyptian churches the cross was a pagan symbol of life, borrowed by the Christians, and interpreted in the pagan manner. See the Encyclopedia Britanica, 11th (Camb) ed., vol. 14, p. 273.

In his Letters from Rome Dean Burgon said: "I question whether a cross occurs on any Christian monument of the first four centuries."

In Mrs. Jameson's famous History of our Lord as Exemplified in Works of Art, she says (vol. Ii, p. 315): "It must be owned that ancient objects of art, as far as hitherto known, afford no corroborations of the use of the cross in the simple transverse form familiar to us, at any period preceding, or even closely anteceding, the time of Chrystom"; and Chrysostom wrote half a century after Constantine!

"The invention of the Cross" by Helena the mother of Constantine in 326), through it means the finding of the cross, may or may not be true; but the 'invention' of its use in later times, are truths of which we need to be reminded in the present day. The evidence is thus complete, that the Lord was put to death upon an upright stake, and not on two pieces of timber

placed at any angle. (The Companion Bible, Appendix 162, page 186)



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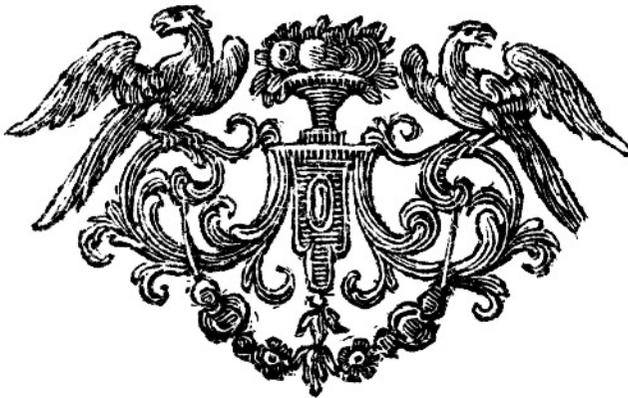
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