

The Cross of Christ or the Stake?

ואמרין (the disciples) תלמידא (to him) לה (& were saying) חזין (we have seen) למרן (our Lord) הו (he) דין (but) אמר (said) להון (to them) אלא (unless) הוא (see) אנה (I) באידוהי (in His hands) דוכיתא (the places) דצצא (of the nails) ורמא (& shall put) אנה (I) בהין (in them) צבעתי (my fingers) ומושט (& reach) אנה (I) אידי (my hand) בדפנה (in His side) לא (not) מהימן (shall believe) אנה (I) -
The Aramaic-English Peshitta Interlinear

25. And the disciples were saying to him, "We have seen Our Lord", but he said to them, "Unless I see **in his hands the places of the nails** and I shall put my fingers in them, and reach my hand into his side, I will not believe."

John 20:25 The Original Aramaic New Testament in Plain English

The above verse shows that Yeshua was not nailed to a stake, as Jehovah's Witnesses claim. How so? The Aramaic uses two plurals: "Duukyatha" - "Places" and "Tsetsey" - "Nails". Two nails were used for the hands, according to the Aramaic text. If a man were nailed to a stake, one nail would be used for the hands and one for the feet. Think about it. Why use more than that, from a Roman point of view? In order to use more, the hands would either be placed one above the other (which would put all the upper body weight on one hand), or they would be placed on either side of the beam, but why would they do that?

Nailing a man to a stake by the hands and feet would greatly increase the probability of tearing his hands from the stake, as much more weight is potentially being borne by the hands, as compared to a cross where the hands being at the side would not be subjected to as much direct downward force, but would distribute it to bear some lateral force as well, making for a much more efficient and effective method of preventing the victim from falling from the gallows, which would likely happen on a stake, once the legs were exhausted from holding him up without rest for a day or more.

The Romans were very efficient and effective killers and executioners. They had crucifixion down to a science. I am sure the cross was the most cruel, effective and efficient instrument of capital punishment and torture ever devised, as it not only cheaply killed the victim, but greatly sobered the populace and doubtless served as a deterrent to would be criminals. The crucified victim would eventually die of asphyxiation as he hung all his weight from his hands and was no longer able to push himself up on his legs to breathe.

If one wishes to argue that the Peshitta seyeme marks (״) for the plural "Tsetsey"- "nails" are not necessarily original, as we do not know if there were seyeme marks used in the first century, I would say that is correct; however, the word "duukyatha" –"places", is very definitely plural in form and needs no seyeme marks to identify it as such, showing that two nails were used for the hands; if one nail were used, there would have been only one place for the nail for both hands-"duuktha" –"place". All the Greek manuscripts of this passage have "**nails**" twice; none has "**nail**"- singular. This indicates that the first century translator understood the Aramaic word "Tsetsey" to be plural and that our Lord was pierced with two nails through his hands; in other words, the Greek translator, who translated in the first century, understood the crucifixion to involve nailing the hands separately on a cross (Greek - "**stauros**"- the word Josephus describes below).

Josephus-Wars of The Jews (written A.D. 73) has the following:

“When, therefore, Vespasian looked upon himself as in a manner besieged by these sallies of the Jews, and when his banks were now not far from the walls, he determined to make use of his battering ram. This battering ram is a vast beam of wood like the mast of a ship, its forepart is armed with a thick piece of iron at the head of it, which is so carved as to be like the head of a ram, whence its name is taken. This ram is slung in the air by ropes passing over its middle, and is **hung like the balance in a pair of scales from another beam, and braced by strong beams that pass on both sides of it, in the nature of a cross.** (Josephus uses the Greek “Stauros“.) When this ram is pulled backward by a great number of men with united force, and then thrust forward by the same men, with a mighty noise, it batters the walls with that iron part which is prominent. Nor is there any tower so strong, or walls so broad, that can resist any more than its first batteries, but all are forced to yield to it at last.”

Josephus-Antiquities has this:

8. On the next day, when the Philistines came to strip their enemies that were slain, they got the bodies of Saul and of his sons, and stripped them, and cut off their heads; and they sent messengers all about their country, to acquaint them that their enemies were fallen;

and they dedicated their armor in the temple of Astarte, but hung their bodies on crosses at the walls of the city Bethshun, which is now called Scythepolls.

3. Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had **condemned him to the cross**, (9) those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; (10) as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

Wikipedia-

The earliest artistic representations of the Crucifixion show Christ on a cross. If they also show the two thieves, these too are on crosses. Not until the second millennium (AD 1000) are the two thieves shown as executed on stakes or trees. Not until the twentieth century is Jesus himself shown (in a Jehovah's Witnesses publication) as dying on a stake.

The first form of that which is called the Christian Cross, found on Christian monuments there, is the unequivocal Pagan Tau, (T) or Egyptian 'Sign of life'. Let the reader peruse the following statement of Sir G. Wilkinson: 'A still 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.' 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 still, 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.

The cross as a Christian symbol or "seal" came into use at least as early as the second century (see "Apost. Const." iii. 17; Epistle of Barnabas, xi.-xii.; Justin, "Apologia," i. 55-60; "Dial. cum Tryph." 85-97); and **the marking of a cross upon the forehead and the chest was regarded as a talisman against the powers of demons** (Tertullian, "De Corona," iii.; Cyprian, "Testimonies," xi. 21-22; Lactantius, "Divinæ Institutiones," iv. 27, and elsewhere). Accordingly the Christian Fathers had to defend themselves, as early as the second century, against the charge of being worshipers of the cross, as may be learned from Tertullian, "Apologia," xii., xvii., and Minucius Felix, "Octavius," xxix. Christians used to swear by the power of the cross (see Apocalypse of Mary, viii., in James, "Texts and Studies," iii. 118).[\[8\]](#)

What meaning would "**the sign of the stake**" have? Has anyone ever used or defined "**the sign of the stake**"?

The Torah of Moses contains a preview of the crucifixion in Exodus chapter 2:

- 7 And they shall take of **the blood**, and strike *it* **on the two side posts** and **on the upper door post** of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.
- 22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.
- 23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth **the blood upon the lintel**, and **on the two side posts**, **the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.**

The Lintel

Side Post

Side Post

Threshold

(Blood stains from lintel blood)

Does the above portray a stake?

The Jewish people in Egypt kept Passover by making the sign of the cross with the blood of a lamb on the doorway of every Jewish dwelling.

"But again Yeshua said to them, 'Timeless truth I speak to you; I AM THE LIVING GOD, **The Door** (or Gate) of the flock. And all who had come were thieves and robbers, but the flock did not hear them. I AM THE LIVING GOD, **The Door**; if anyone will enter by me, he shall live and shall go in and out and shall find the pasture.'" -John 10:7-9

The Passover required that the sign of a cross be made on every doorway of every Jewish house, or the Destroyer would come to that house and kill the firstborn.

What do you think?

Did YHWH Yeshua die on a cross or a stake?

What does **the Blood of The Passover Lamb** say to you?

Our Passover Lamb is The Messiah, who was slain for our sake.- 1 Cor. 5:7

22. But you have come to The Mountain of Zion and to The City of THE LIVING GOD, to The Jerusalem which is in Heaven, and to the assembly of myriads of Angels; 23. And to the church of the firstborn ones who are written in Heaven, and to God The Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous who are made perfect, 24. And to **Yeshua, The Mediator of The New Covenant, and to the sprinkling of his blood, which speaks better than that of Abel.** - Hebrews 12:22-24

For many who walk differently, about whom I have told you many times, but now as I weep, I say that they are the enemies of the cross of The Messiah. – Philipp 3:18

Where are the enemies of the stake of The Messiah? I don't know what Paul may have meant if he spoke of enemies of the stake, (*though it sounds like a good movie title, somehow*). Usually an anti-movement forms around a well established tradition, doctrine or religion. I don't know of an anti stake movement, per se. I do know that it seems important to Jehovah's Witnesses and others to remove references to the cross, that many atheists take offense at public cross displays, as do other cults and extremist groups.

We ought to be suspicious of such groups, though I see no problem with those who honestly question in order to know the truth. We ought to question and test all claims and hold fast to what is good and proven.