

The Origin Of The Christian Cross

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The most important and sacred symbol of mainstream "Christianity" (made up of Catholics, Protestants, and other Sunday-keeping churches) is the cross. It is used on Bibles and on church signs, altars, and rooftops. The floor plans of many church buildings are in the shape of the cross. It is hung around devotees' necks on a chain and kissed when they are under duress. Everywhere in the world, you find Catholic churches, homes, hospitals, and schools with crosses ornamenting the walls. It is idolized on a global scale, not just by the Protestants, Catholics, and Sunday-keeping groups, but others as well.

Most Protestants don't usually bow down to it. Most recognize that such superstition is non-biblical. Nevertheless, they use the cross on their steeples and church signs and icon trademarks. And so, mainstream Christianity has wrongly assumed that there is advantage in displaying it.

I talked with a man this week; he called in for the second time, and I talked with him. He was raised Catholic. We talked about some of the basic things of God's truth, and the cross and idols came up. He said, "I have a cross hanging on my wall. It has been there as long as I have been alive." He said, "I really like it, appreciate it, and look to it." So I explained a little bit about the background of the cross (which I am going to explain to you), and he said something very interesting to me, and it answers a lot of questions about why people use it. He said (after I talked to him), "Well, I know it's wrong, and I know it is an idol, but the Catholic church does such a good job of brainwashing you." He said, "I feel guilty to destroy it or take it down." He said, "I know it is pagan; I know it is wrong, but I feel guilty and I cannot take it down." That is the depth of the indoctrination. It was a superstition to him.

How did this icon become so thoroughly representative of mainstream Christianity? History shows that the cross was used centuries before Christ

walked the earth, centuries before the Christian era. A study of historical evidence clearly reveals that the cross symbol is of pagan origin from antiquity.

Historians say that it was a symbol associated with the false savior Tammuz. Tammuz was the illegitimate son of the goddess mother Semiramis from the 23rd century BC. The original form of the cross symbol is believed to have come from the first letter of the name Tammuz—the capital ‘T’.

More than 800 years before the Christian era, the cross was honored as a religious symbol by the people of Assyria and Babylon. It is seen on their oldest monuments. For example, in the British Museum is a statue of the Assyrian king Samsi-Vul II, son of Shalmaneser. Around his neck is an almost perfect Maltese cross.

From Babylon, this cross spread to Egypt, where monuments preserved to this day give abundant evidence of its use there. The form of the cross specially known as the cross of Egypt, or the Tau cross, is shaped like the capital letter ‘T’, often with a circle or ovoid above it.

Also, the cross in various forms has been a sacred symbol in non-Christian India for centuries. In China, the walls of ancient pagodas displayed the symbol. Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans of Kabyle make use of the cross. Across the continent of Africa, various forms of the cross are found among many of the different religions and tribes.

The ancient Greek goddess Diana is pictured with a cross over her head in much the same way the “Virgin Mary” is represented by many medieval artists. Bacchus, the ancient Greek god of wine, is often pictured wearing a headdress adorned with crosses. As the cross spread to the ancient nations, it took on different forms in different countries until there were many forms of the pagan cross.

Let me give you a few more examples of how these different crosses were actually sacred symbols long before the Christian era. What is known as the Greek cross is also found on Egyptian monuments. This Greek cross is also found in Phrygia where it adorned the (718 BC) tomb of Midas. In the ruins of

the Assyrian city of Ninevah, which was destroyed in 612 BC, a king is shown wearing a Maltese cross on his chest.

The form of the cross used today is known as the Latin cross. It was used prior to the 3rd century BC by the Etruscans on an ancient pagan tomb with winged angels to each side.

The symbol called the St. Andrew's cross appeared on the coins of Alexander Bala in Syria in 146 BC, and on those of Baktrian kings about 140-120 BC, long before the apostle Andrew was even born.

In 46 BC, Roman coins show Jupiter holding a long scepter terminating in a cross. This was Jupiter's symbol, similar to what the Pope holds today. The temple virgins of the Roman goddess Vesta wore the cross suspended from their necklaces, as the nuns of the Roman Catholic Church do now.

Obviously, cross worship did not originate with Christ, and all these various forms of the cross were occult symbols before the Christian era.

It's shocking to professing Christians when they find out that the use of the cross by mainstream Christianity did not begin until the time of Constantine, three centuries after Christ's death. Although this fact is readily available in many historical and theological works, they still choose to ignore it so they may continue to follow the traditions of their false teachers.

As an instrument of death—of crucifixion—the cross is also very ancient and pagan. According to the book, *The Cross in Tradition, History and Art*, “Tradition ascribes the invention of the punishment of the cross to a woman, the queen Semiramis.”

The cross was later used in ancient times as a punishment for flagrant crimes in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Palestine, Carthage, Greece, and Rome.

A very powerful point is made with this question: “If Jesus had been murdered with a shotgun, would you wear one around your neck as a symbol of your adoration of Christ?” I've always wondered what the answer to that question would be.

The early Christians did not consider the cross as a virtuous symbol, but rather as “the accursed tree,” a device of death and shame.

Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

“Cross” is the translator’s interpretation of the Greek word *stauros*.

Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),”

The true Christian’s faith is in what was accomplished on the cross; and through this, faith. Christ, not the cross, provides the full and complete forgiveness of sin. It was in this sense that the apostles preached about the cross and gloried in it. Their messages concerned the One who hung and died on the tree. Never did they consider a piece of wood as a protector or an object of worship.

Archaeologists have not found any "Christian" use of cross the symbol before the 5th century AD. It was not until Christianity began to be paganized that the Roman Catholic cross came to be thought of as a Christian symbol. It was not until 431 AD that crosses in the churches were introduced, and its worship sanctioned by the church of Rome. It was not until the second council at Ephesus in 449 AD that private homes were required by the Catholic church to possess a cross. The use of crosses on steeples did not come until about 586 AD.

So, this false tradition of the cross was obviously not a true doctrine of the early church of God. According to Jude 3, the true church of God is commanded to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” This includes the avoidance of ancient pagan practices and artifacts.

To set the record straight: What type of cross was it upon which Jesus died? The English word “cross” in the Bible is translated from the original Greek word *stauros*, which comes from the root *sta*, that is, “to stand.” As far as the word itself is concerned, there is no indication of any cross piece whatsoever.

In his scholarly “Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,” W.E. Vine states that the Greek word *stauros* means simply “upright stake,” and is

to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of the two beamed cross... (which) had its origin in ancient Chaldea, 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....

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.

The New Testament does not specifically describe the instrument, upon which Christ died, though in Acts it is referred to as a tree three times. It is translated from the Greek word *xulou* and can mean a tree, stake, or wood.

In the words of the apostle Peter and the other apostles,

Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.

They were eyewitnesses to where Christ was hung when murdered. They knew what they saw.

In the words of the apostle Peter,

Acts 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.

In the words of the apostle Paul

Acts 13:30 ... they took Him [Jesus] down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead.

There is absolutely no evidence that God's true church ever used the cross symbol for any purpose, and nowhere does the Bible command or condone its use. The instrument of Christ's death is not the important thing to remember, but the One who hung on that stake or tree and what He accomplished—that is ALL important.