

Notes: May 2 2015

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Atonement - Found In Only One Place

In last week's sermon "*The Omer – A Measure of Something More*" I had shown you the consistency of Adonai's instructions when done properly.

Last week I shared with you that if it was Shavuot, there must be a first fruits offering. I showed you Exodus 19, Matthew 27 and Acts 2 as testimony to the consistency of this stipulation being presented.

So, this week I am going to address a subject that I have alluded to on many occasions yet have not truly presented in a manner that provides Scriptural validation.

What I am about to share with you, will likely upset some of you, yet I encourage you to search the Scriptures and do the research if you don't trust me.

Why will it likely upset you?

Most likely it is because the symbol has become so associated with what you believe that in addressing the symbol you may think that I am attacking what you believe. Yet I want you to keep in mind, it is not an attack against what you believe, but rather what you are doing to perpetuate your beliefs.

Ask a christian about the cross and they will likely tell you:

“It is where my sin was forgiven”

“It is where Jesus paid the price for us”

The Encyclopedia Britannica calls the cross “the principal symbol of the Christian religion.”

“Because of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice on the cross, those who place their faith and trust in Him alone for salvation are guaranteed eternal life” (<http://www.gotquestions.org/meaning-of-the-cross.html#ixzz3Yyq8RgGA>)

“The cross is venerated and admired across the wide spectrum of traditional Christian churches. It is a cornerstone symbol—representing the message of Jesus Christ and how He died for the sins of humanity.”

To the point, whenever my mother in-law asks me a question and doesn't understand my response, no matter how many ways I try to explain it to her, she will get frustrated and say “its all about the cross”

In some denominations you have Jesus still on the cross, while throughout the rest of Christianity, the symbol that identifies them is a cross.

I find it interesting that people need to identify who they are and what they believe by wearing a symbol that represents what they believe, where Yeshua says something quite different during the sermon on the mount...

Mat 7:18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, or a poor tree good fruit.

Mat 7:19 Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire!

Mat 7:20 So you will recognize them by their fruit.

Yet, in many ways believers know very little about what they profess to believe.

Would you believe me if I told you that the Greek word that is used and translated into cross, really isn't a cross at all?

The Greek word stauros, Strong's Concordance Number #4716, is often translated as "cross." This is an error in translation. Stauros should be translated as "stake" or "post". The instrument of torture on which Jesus died was NOT in the shape of the letter "T". It was simply a post or stake on which the victim was hung by nailing both hands over his head. The feet were also impaled so the victim not only suffered more pain, but also was unable to move enough to dislodge the hands. This caused suffocation if the victim did not die from other afflictions.

So, when you look at the CJB translation in such places as Matthew 16:24:

Mat 16:24 Then Yeshua told his talmidim, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him say 'No' to himself, take up his execution-stake, and keep following me.

This is actually a more accurate translation than many of the bibles out there today.

So, if there is no cross, as is understood by the word stauros, where did this idea come from?

“Historical evidence points to Constantine as the one who had the major share in uniting Sun-worship and the Messianic Faith. Constantine's famous vision of "the cross superimposed on the sun", in the year 312, is usually cited. Writers, ignorant of the fact that the cross was not to be found in the New Testament Scriptures, put much emphasis on this vision as the onset of the so-called "conversion" of Constantine. But, unless Constantine had been misguided by the Gnostic Manichean half-Christians, who indeed used the cross in their hybrid religion, this vision of the cross superimposed on the sun could only be the same old cosmic religion, the astrological religion of Babylon. The fact remains: that which Constantine saw, is nowhere to be found in Scripture.”

In a similar manner you will not find within the New Covenant writings God's Name as understood as “Yud Hey Vav Hey”

Yet I have people challenging me all the time with their view, understanding or interpretation. Yet people pay little attention to what is right there in front of them. Many times choosing to continue believing what they have been

taught, rather than growing as a believer.

So, if the cross isn't truly mentioned in scripture, where did it come from?

“Where did the cross come from, then? J.C. Cooper, An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols, p. 45, aptly summarizes it, “Cross - A universal symbol from the most remote times; it is the cosmic symbol par excellence.” Other authorities also call it a sun-symbol, a Babylonian sun-symbol, an astrological Babylonian-Assyrian and heathen run-symbol, also in the form of an encircled cross referred to as a “solar wheel”, and many other varieties of crosses. Also, “the cross represents the Tree of Life”, the age-old fertility symbol, combining the vertical male and horizontal female principles, especially in Egypt, either as an ordinary cross, or better known in the form of the crux ansata, the Egyptian ankh (sometimes called the Tau cross), which had been carried over into our modern-day symbol of the female, well known in biology.

(The tree of life here is not referring to etz chaim in the Jewish sense but rather the reproductive aspect of man and woman.)

So, even before Christianity existed, the cross was already associated with something else, something pagan. This seems to be par for the course. How many times have we seen the repurposing of a pagan practice into an acceptable Christian practice?

“...the indisputable sign of Tammuz, the mystic Tau of the Babylonians and Egyptians, was brought into the Church chiefly because of Constantine, and has since been adored with all the homage due only to the Most High.”

How many times have believers justified something as being acceptable:

“To us it doesn't mean that, but represents this...

The christmas tree, easter...you can now add the cross to this list

Christians are more apt to justify what they believe and without knowing the origin of what they are justifying.

Don't get me wrong, Judaism is far from exempt from this mindset.

Within Rabbinic Judaism today, you have the names for the months on the calendar originating from the Babylonian calendar. According to an explanation by Chabad:

“The original system was to count months in numeric order, starting from Nissan. Thus, any time a person mentioned a month, he was in effect recalling the exodus from Egypt: we are in, say, the sixth month—six months since the month of the Exodus. Thus, the numeric naming served as a constant reminder of our deliverance from Egypt.

After we were delivered from Babylonian captivity, however, we started using the names that we became used to using in Babylon. And now, these names served to remind us that G-d has redeemed us from this second exile.”

Yes, even a month named after the god Tammuz.

There are justifications in Rabbinical Judaism that are equally as questionable as those found being done by the church.

Taking it a step further and coming back to the intent of this sermon:

Messianic Rabbi Sam Nadler writes:

“God's way of forgiving sins is as misunderstood as sin itself. People discuss whether the Temple, which was a place

of sacrifices, will ever be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The problem with rebuilding the Temple is not a Muslim Mosque atop the Temple Mount, but many centuries of traditional rabbinical teaching. Tradition has erroneously taught our people that we do not need blood atonement for sins. Yet the Scriptures state that blood sacrifice is necessary to atone for sins."

Repent of our sins on Yom Kippur, and do good deeds.

This is how forgiveness of sin is conveyed in Rabbinic Judaism today, yet as I have mentioned before, there is a concerted effort to rebuild the Temple.

We even talked about this on a Tuesday evening not too long ago regarding Jewish objections to Yeshua as Messiah. If there is no need for blood sacrifice anymore, why focus on rebuilding the Temple?

Yet, scripture conveys a much different story. In this week's Parashah we read of Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement, what is to be done, and what the intended outcome will be, if done correctly, according to the Word of Adonai.

In Leviticus 16, the instructions pertaining to Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement are given, including what is to be done for the cohen and the sacrifices to where when we get to verse 27 and the instruction of what to do with what remains, it is after atonement is made in the Holy Place, that is on the altar...

Lev 16:27 "The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, is to be carried outside the camp; there they are to burn up completely their hides, meat and dung.

At the beginning of chapter 17, Adonai is instructing Moshe to tell the people that they are to bring their sacrifices to the Tent of Meeting, the Mishkan, the Tabernacle.

Lev 17:1 Adonai said to Moshe,

Lev 17:2 "Speak to Aharon and his sons and to all the people of Isra'el. Tell them that this is what Adonai has ordered:

Lev 17:3 'When someone from the community of Isra'el slaughters an ox, lamb or goat inside or outside the camp

Lev 17:4 without bringing it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to Adonai before the tabernacle of Adonai, he is to be charged with blood — he has shed blood, and that person is to be cut off from his people.

The reason for this...

Lev 17:5 The reason for this is so that the people of Isra'el will bring their sacrifices that they sacrifice out in the field — so that they will bring them to Adonai, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to the cohen, and sacrifice them as peace offerings to Adonai.

Their sacrifices for offerings will not be accepted anywhere else. This is to prevent their sacrifices being offered up to foreign gods.

Then Adonai conveys to Moshe what is to be done...

Lev 17:6 The cohen will splash the blood against the altar of Adonai at the entrance to the tent of meeting and make the fat go up in smoke as a pleasing aroma for Adonai.

Lev 17:7 No longer will they offer sacrifices to the goat-demons, before whom they prostitute themselves! This is a permanent regulation for them through all their generations.'

Lev 17:8 "Also tell them, 'When someone from the community of Isra'el or one of the foreigners living with you offers a burnt offering or sacrifice

Lev 17:9 without bringing it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to sacrifice it to Adonai, that person is to be cut off from his people.

And in this case, Adonai give a reason why He is telling them what to do and why they are doing it.

Lev 17:10 When someone from the community of Isra'el or one of the foreigners living with you eats any kind of blood, I will set myself against that person who eats blood and cut him off from his people.

Lev 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for yourselves; for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.'

Lev 17:12 This is why I told the people of Isra'el, 'None of you is to eat blood, nor is any foreigner living with you to eat blood.'

Keep in mind we are not talking about food here but about sacrifices brought to Adonai as we studied in Leviticus chapters 1 – 8.

FYI...killing for food is mentioned in verses 13 through 16.

The key verse is verse 11...

Lev 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for yourselves; for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.'

Atonement is made on the altar that is authorized by Adonai. No place else.

Yet, just as many in Rabbinic Judaism seemingly don't acknowledge that the requirements for atonement are just as valid today as they were when the Temple was standing, equally they do not realize that the sacrifice is different, and yet better.

Equally, the majority of Christians are equally as blind to the requirements as instructed by Adonai to Moshe regarding His means for accepting a sacrifice to atone for one's sins, whether individual or corporately.

Everything points to the cross. Atonement was made at the cross. Forgiveness of sin was accomplished at the cross.

I challenge anyone to show me in scripture where it says atonement is made at the cross. Keeping in mind that the idea of the cross as is understood today, isn't even found in the Greek but is mistranslated.

How long are we as believers going to hold on to these idols that have infiltrated our beliefs?

Rabbi Nadler goes on to write...

“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 the God of Israel!”

This “major stumbling block” is a result of the acts that were associated and ultimately attached to this symbol that represents Christianity. Acts such as the pogroms, inquisition and crusades. Even the Holocaust is attributed to the

association of Christianity, whereby the origin of the Protestant Reformation, Germany was 99% Christian and Hitler's original methodology was labeled "Positive Christianity". So, it should come as no surprise, based on these past events that the cross to a Jewish person did not convey the image of redemption but rather an image of an upside down sword that invoked persecution, anti-Semitism and death for non-conversion.

There is to be nothing between us and Adonai except Yeshua, who is the one that intercedes on our behalf...

Joh 14:6 Yeshua said, "I AM the Way — and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me.

Yet we make idols out of things and justify their significance.

We justify "the why we do what we do", and most times either without Scripture or Scripture that is incorrectly used.

Hopefully you have been here long enough to know that I would not tell you something and not support it with Scripture.

I am making a bold statement regarding the over emphasis of the cross...

It is not where atonement was made.

It was not where forgiveness of sin happened.

So, if I am making these bold statements, I had better back up what I am saying, not as my opinion, but through the authority of Scripture.

Heb 9:11 But when the Messiah appeared as cohen gadol of the good things that are happening already, then, through the greater and more perfect Tent which is not man-made (that is, it is not of this created world),

Heb 9:12 he entered the Holiest Place once and for all. And he entered not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus setting people free forever.

Heb 9:13 For if sprinkling ceremonially unclean persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer restores their outward purity;

Heb 9:14 then how much more the blood of the Messiah, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God as a sacrifice without blemish, will purify our conscience from works that lead to death, so that we can serve the living God!

If you do not accept what I am saying than the issue is not with me, but with the Scriptures you read, how you were taught and ultimately how you understand.

There is a consistency found in Scripture that can be trusted, for nothing else than who the author is. This consistency is found through correctly understanding His Word, in its proper context and applying it to your lives.

I have told you many times...

"Know what you believe, why you believe it and be able to support it."

Bible.org. QUESTION: Is wearing a cross around my neck going against the teachings of Jesus? I look at it as a reminder of the sins he carried for us. But my son says it is an idol (false image of Jesus) and that we should not have them in the house.

ANSWER: The Greek word *stauros*, *Strong's Concordance* Number #4716, is often translated as "cross." This is an error in translation. *Stauros* should be translated as "stake" or "post". The instrument of torture on which Jesus died was NOT in the shape of the letter "T". It was simply a post or stake on which the victim was hung by nailing both hands over his head. The feet were also impaled so the victim not only suffered more pain, but also was unable to move enough to dislodge the hands. This caused suffocation if the victim did not die from other afflictions.

The representation of the crucifixion many people possess originated well before Jesus was born on planet earth! In certain cultures, it was called a Tau and represented a female. Because of this symbolism, it was used by quite a few pagan (non-Christian) religions to present their female goddesses such as Venus or Astarte. Christianity was first introduced to this symbol Constantine the Great in 313 A. D. The well-known book *The Two Babylons* states that Catholics believed the cross was some great charm and was adored as much as God himself! The book goes on to say the cross and its different representations was used by pagans (just like the Catholics) as some kind of magic symbol that would protect them.

In reality, in terms of what the Bible teaches, the *Tau* has nothing to do with Jesus or Christianity.

The word *stauros* is also used figuratively in the Bible, for instance Matthew 10:38, where Jesus told His followers to take up their "cross" and follow Him. In this instance, it represents the sacrifice one makes when leaving the ways of the world and following Jesus.

We are cautioned in the Ten Commandments to NOT make idols that look like anything either in space or the sky, on the earth itself or even in the oceans (Exodus 20:4).

A tradition of the Church which our fathers have inherited, was the adoption of the words "cross" and "crucify".

These words are nowhere to be found in the Greek of the New Testament. These words are mistranslations, a "later rendering", of the Greek words *stauros* and *stauroo*. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says, "STAUROS denotes, primarily, an upright pole or stake ... Both the noun and the verb *stauroo*, to fasten to a stake or pole, are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two-beamed cross.

The shape of the latter 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) ... By the middle of the 3rd century A.D. 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 .

Dr. Bullinger, in the Companion Bible, appx. 162, states, "crosses were used as symbols of the Babylonian Sun-god ... It should be stated that Constantine was a Sun-god worshipper ... 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."

Rev. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 197-205, frankly calls the cross "this Pagan symbol ... the Tau, the sign of the cross, the indisputable sign of Tammuz, the false Messiah ... the mystic Tau of the Cladeans (Babylonians) and Egyptians - the true original form of the letter T the initial of the name of Tammuz ... the Babylonian cross was the recognised emblem of Tammuz."

In the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, vol. 14, p. 273, we read, "In the Egyptian churches the cross was a pagan symbol of life borrowed by the Christians and interpreted in the pagan manner." Jacob Grimm, in his *Deutsche Mythologie*, says that the Teutonic (Germanic) tribes had their idol Thor, symbolised by a hammer, while the Roman Christians had their *crux* (cross). It was thus somewhat easier for the Teutons to accept the Roman Cross.

Greek dictionaries, lexicons and other study books also declare the primary meaning of stauros to be an upright pale, pole or stake. The secondary meaning of "cross" is admitted by them to be a "later" rendering. At least two of them do not even mention "cross", and only render the meaning as "pole or stake".

In spite of this strong evidence and proof that the word stauros should have been translated "stake", and the verb stauroo to have been translated "impale", almost all the common versions of the Scriptures persist with the Latin Vulgate's crux (cross), a fallacious "later" rendering of the Greek stauros. Why then was the "cross" (crux) brought into the Faith?

Again, historical evidence points to Constantine as the one who had the major share in uniting Sun-worship and the Messianic Faith. Constantine's famous vision of "the cross superimposed on the sun", in the year 312, is usually cited. Writers, ignorant of the fact that the cross was not to be found in the New Testament Scriptures, put much emphasis on this vision as the onset of the so-called "conversion" of Constantine. But, unless Constantine had been misguided by the Gnostic Manichean half-Christians, who indeed used the cross in their hybrid religion, this vision of the cross superimposed on the sun could only be the same old cosmic religion, the astrological religion of Babylon. The fact remains: that which Constantine saw, is nowhere to be found in Scripture.

We read in the book of Johannes Geffcken, *The Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, p.319, "that even after 314 A.D. the coins of Constantine show an even-armed cross as a symbol for the Sun-god." Many scholars have doubted the "conversion" of Constantine because of the wicked deeds that he did afterwards, and because of the fact that he only requested to be baptized on his death-bed many years later, in the year 337. So, if the vision of the cross impressed him, and was used as a rallying symbol, it could not have been in honour of Yahushúa, because Constantine continued paying homage to the Sun-deity and to one of the Sun-deity's symbols, the cross.

This continuation of Sun-worship by Constantine is of by his persistent use of images of the Sun-deity on his coins that were issued by him up to the year 323. Secondly, the fact of his motivation to issue his Sunday-keeping edict in the year 321, which was not done in honour of Yahushúa, but was done because of the "venerable day of the Sun", as the edict read, is proof of this continued allegiance to Sol Invictus. We shall expand on this later.

Where did the cross come from, then? J.C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*, p. 45, aptly summarises it, "Cross - A universal symbol from the most remote times; it is the cosmic symbol par excellence." Other authorities also call it a sun-symbol, a Babylonian sun-symbol, an astrological Babylonian-Assyrian and heathen run-symbol, also in the form of an encircled cross referred to as a "solar wheel", and many other varieties of crosses. Also, "the cross represents the Tree of Life", the age-old fertility symbol, combining the vertical male and horizontal female principles, especially in Egypt, either as an ordinary cross, or better known in the form of the crux ansata, the Egyptian ankh (sometimes called the Tau cross), which had been carried over into our modern-day symbol of the female, well known in biology.

As stated above, the indisputable sign of Tammuz, the mystic Tau of the Babylonians and Egyptians, was brought into the Church chiefly because of Constantine, and has since been adored with all the homage due only to the Most High.

The Protestants have for many years refrained from undue adoration of, or homage to the cross, especially in England at the time of the Puritans in the 16th - 17th centuries. But lately this un-Scriptural symbol has been increasingly accepted in Protestantism.

We have previously discussed "the weeping for Tammuz", and the similarity between the Easter resurrection and the return or rising of Tammuz. Tammuz was the young incarnate Sun, the Sun-divinity incarnate. This same Sun-deity, known amongst the Babylonians as Tammuz, was identified with the Greek Adonis and with the Phoenician Adoni,⁹⁶ all of them Sun-deities, being slain in winter, then being "wept for", and their return being celebrated by a festivity in spring, while some had it in summer - according to the myths of pagan idolatry.

The evidence for its pagan origin is so convincing that The Catholic Encyclopedia admits that "the sign of the cross, represented in its simplest form by a crossing of two lines at right angles, greatly antedates, in both East and the

West, the introduction of Christianity. It goes back to a very remote period of human civilization." It then continues and refers to the Tau cross of the pagan Egyptians, "In later times the Egyptian Christians (Copts), attracted by its form, and perhaps by its symbolism, adopted it as the emblem of the cross."⁹⁸ Further proof of its pagan origin is the recorded evidence of the Vestal Virgins of pagan Rome having the cross hanging on a necklace,⁹⁹ and the Egyptians doing it too, as early as the 15th century B.C.E.¹⁰⁰ The Buddhists, and

Ancient Egyptian Rot-n-no priests. Note the crosses on the robe, and hanging from their necks.

Numerous other sects of India, also used the sign of the cross as a mark on their followers' heads. "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. "It was also the symbol of Jupiter Foederis in Rome.¹⁰³ Furthermore, we read of the cross on top of the temple of Serapis,¹⁰⁴ the Sun-deity of Alexandria.

This is Tammuz, whom the Greeks called Bacchus, with the crosses on his head-band.

After Constantine had the "vision of the cross", he and his army promoted another variety of the cross, the Chi-Rho or Labarum or sometimes . This has subsequently been explained as representing the first letters of the name Christos, the being the Greek for "Ch" and the being the Greek for "r". but again, this emblem had a pagan origin. The identical symbols were found as inscriptions on a rock, dating from the year ca. 2 500 B.C., being interpreted as "a combination of two Sun-symbols", as the Ax or Hammer-symbol of the Sun- or Sky-deity, and the or as the ancient symbol of the Sun, both of these signs having a sensual or fertility meaning as well.

Another proof of its pagan origin is the identical found on a coin of Ptolemy III from the year 247 - 222 B.C. A well-known encyclopaedia describes the Labarum (Chi-Rho) as, "The labarum was also an emblem of the Chaldean (Babylonian) sky-god and in Christianity it was adopted..." Emperor Constantine adopted this Labarum as the imperial ensign and thereby succeeded in "uniting both divisions of his troops, pagans and Christians, in a common worship ... according to Suicer the word (labarum) came into use in the reign of Hadrian, and was probably adopted from one of the nations conquered by the Romans. "It must be remembered that Hadrian reigned in the years 76 - 138, that he was a pagan emperor, worshipped the Sun-deity Serapis when he visited Alexandria, and was vehemently anti-Judaistic, being responsible for the final near-destruction of Jerusalem in the year 130.

Another dictionary relates the following about the Chi-Rho, "However, the symbol was in use long before Christianity, and X (Chi) probably stood for Great Fire or Sun, and P (Rho) probably stood for Pater or Patah (Father). The word labarum (labarum) yields everlasting Father Sun."

What is the "mark of the beast" of which we read in [Rev 13:16-17](#), [Rev 14:9-11](#), [Rev 15:2](#), [Rev 16:2](#), [Rev 19:20](#) and [Rev 20:4](#) - a mark on people's foreheads and on their right hands? [Rev 14:11](#) reveals the mark to be "the mark of his (the beast's) name." Have we not read about the mystic Tau, the T, the initial of Tammuz's name, his mark? This same letter T (Tau) was written in Egyptian hieroglyphics and in the old Wemitic languages as, representing the CROSS. Different interpretations have been given to the "mark of the beast", and also the cross has been suggested. There has been some research done on the strange crosses found on quite a few statues of pagan priests, on their foreheads. However, these scholars have been unable to come to an agreement. Conclusive evidence may still come (see among others: Dr. F.J. Dolger, *Antike und Christentum*, vol. 2, pp. 281-293).

Let us rather use the true rendering of the Scriptural words stauros and stauro, namely "stake" and "impale" and eliminate the un-Scriptural "cross" and "crucify".

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

't.' From the Greek New Testament, the word that our English translates as 'cross', is a piece of wood that is a stake or a pole, that's all. And many times it's just called a tree (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 the pagans. 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 has this:

'A. Noun

'stauros (4716) denotes, primarily, 'an upright pale or stake.' On such malefactors were nailed for execution. Both the noun and the verb (sta-roo), '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 latter 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 A.D. 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.'

B. Verbs

1. 'stauroo (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,'

2. 'sustauroo (4957), 'to crucify with' (su-, 'for,' sun-, '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.' [1](#)

In Bauer's classical Greek lexicon, the word stauros is, 'in the sense', an 'upright, pointed stake'.[2](#) 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 reads, 'a stake sunk into the earth in an upright position; a cross-piece was oft. (Artem. 2, 53) attached to its upper part, so that it was shaped like a T or thus t.' [3](#) As we can see, there is nothing from the biblical word itself, that means that the 'cross' or stauros, or wooden pole that the Lord was pierced to, had to have a cross-piece with it.

The other Greek word that is sometimes translated 'cross' in our English translations is zu-lon). 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.' Again, 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.'[4](#) 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 1500 years before Jesus though. Hislop shows how deeply steeped in paganism and superstition it is. The following is a quote from his book:

Section VI - 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. 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 offense.'⁵

'To say that such superstitious feeling for the sign of the cross, such worship as Rome pays to a wooden or 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. 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 honored with the same honors.'

'That which is now called the Christian cross was originally no Christian emblem at all, but was the mystic Tau of the Chaldeans and the 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, as found on coins, was formed as in No. 1.' (#1 refers to a picture on page 197 in Hislop's book, of a cross, which looks like the common, small 't' cross of most any church.)

The 'mystic Tau was marked in baptism on the foreheads of those initiated in the Mysteries ⁶ and was used in every variety of way as a most sacred symbol. To identify Tammuz with the sun, as in No. 4; sometimes it was inserted in the circle, as in No. 5.' (The cross of #4, pictured in his book on page 197, is a small t with a circle at the top, while the cross of #5 has cross-bars of equal length and width, with the circle surrounding it, or touching all four outer points.)

'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 ⁷ and 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.'

'The Vestal virgins of Pagan Rome wore it suspended from their necklaces, as the nuns do now.⁸ 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 the necklace, or to the collar of their dress...showing that it was already in use as early as the fifteenth century before the Christian era.'⁹

'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.'¹⁰

'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.'¹¹

'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.'¹²

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.' 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 favorite 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) ¹³ 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.'¹⁴

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 worshipers are taught thus to address it: 'Hail, O Cross, triumphal wood, true salvation of the world, among trees there is none like thee in leaf, flower, and bud. O Cross, our only hope, increase righteousness to the godly and pardon the offenses of the guilty.'¹⁵

'Can any one, 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? But when it is considered that the Buddhist, like the Babylonian cross, was the recognized 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.'

'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.¹⁶ Egypt especially which was never thoroughly evangelized, 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 pursue 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 sepulchers of the great Oasis, ¹⁷ 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.'¹⁸

'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 ¹⁹ 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 it's first employment on the sepulchers, 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. 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:'

'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 some 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 till 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.'[20](#)

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; 'that it was not the sign of the cross that was seen, but quite a different thing, the' (initial for the) 'name of Christ' (which in Greek is an X). '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.'[21](#)

'Now, the' (Greek) 'letter X was just the initial of the name of Christ, being equivalent in Greek to CH' (sound). '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 know 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.'[22](#) 'The Labarum, that is, the ensign consecrated by the NAME of Christ.'[23](#) There is not the slightest allusion to any cross - to anything but the simple name of 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 thou shalt 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 'Sinfonia 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 Vincas X.'[24](#) 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';[25](#) and Eusebius, who wrote when superstition and apostasy 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 [26](#) 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. Any one who pleases may satisfy himself of this by examining the plates given in Mr. Elliot's *Horae Apocalypticae*.²⁷ The standard of Constantine, then, was just the name of Christ.' '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 soldier's in Constantine's army with more than usual fire to fight and conquer at the Milvian bridge.'

'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?'²⁸

From Vine and Bauer we saw that the primary meaning of the Greek word translated as 'cross' in our English Bibles, means, an upright pole or stake. Hislop revealed that the standard 't' cross of Christianity is false and pagan. There is therefore, 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 the pagan cross.

It seems that the Lord, from the biblical account, was pierced to an upright stake or pole. This is interesting as the Lord Himself makes reference to such when He states in John 3:14, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up'; '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. The primary action of the verses point us to the Lord's hanging between Heaven and Earth, that is to say, His Death. But the secondary level here, 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* tells us that the Hebrew word for what the snake was to be placed upon is *nais*, which means, a 'pole, Nu. 21:8, 9.'²⁹ The *Hebrew and English Lexicon of Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius* also affirms this saying it's a 'pole, supporting' a 'serpent of bronze' 'Nu 21:8-9'.³⁰ Both authorities specifically cite Num. 21:8-9 for pole. And no less an authority than C. F. Keil also believes it was only a pole (and not a standard Christian cross).³¹

Another issue is what the Church has done with it's cross. It has become the symbol to represent Jesus and has come to be revered or worshipped by 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, he destroyed the pole on which Moses placed the bronze serpent (2nd Kings 18:1-6). Why? The people had been burning incense to it! They were 'worshipping' God that way. 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 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 gold pole), to the Apostle Peter, to wear around his neck? His Friend, His King, was just pierced to 'it'. He saw and felt all the horror of Yeshua's death. He probably would not have appreciated its 'symbolic' significance.

And what if the Lord had died in an electric chair? Every church would have an electric chair where they now have

crosses. Big electric chairs, little electric chairs, wooden electric chairs and metal electric chairs. Diamond studded electric chairs and gold plated electric chairs. And homes would be adorned with them. 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 the ones meditating on it 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 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?

Yahveh declares that He doesn't want to be worshipped the way the pagans worship their gods,³² or to have graven ³³ or wooden symbols ³⁴ to represent Him. He wants us to do what is right in His Eyes, not ours.³⁵ There is also the admonition to not let anyone entice us to going after other gods and worshiping them (Deut. 13:1-6ff). In this section, the Lord is saying that even if a (false) prophet's words come true, about whatever it is he spoke, the Lord commands His People not to follow him saying that He was testing His People Israel:

'you shall 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.' (Deut. 13:3)

Setting the paganism of the cross aside, I have some questions for those who wear the 'Christian' cross: Could it be that you've come to a point in your journey that the Lord wants you to choose between Him and it? 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 do you 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. By whose authority do you do this? It would seem that the only authority one has for the traditional 'Christian' cross is the Roman Catholic Church's tradition of using it. There is no biblical authority for it. And if this is so, how can one wear the cross and still be an example of Jesus? The cross is the pagan symbol for the anti-Christ, first seen in Tammuz, the god of the Babylonians.

And 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 (Tabernacle) of Meeting. Everything in there is minutely described in detail; the Ark, the Menorah (Seven Branched 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 or God's?

We can make anything symbolize anything we want ³⁶ 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 why I have a problem with the traditional cross as it is presented.

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 people, as well as many Christians, are enamored with the Star of David. But where in Scripture does God give His People Israel the Star of David? To the Jewish People, and others, it symbolizes the Jewish People. But it is not an authoritative 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. And the God of Israel has never given us the Catholic cross or the so called, Star of David.³⁷

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

'And if it seem evil to you to serve Adonai, choose you 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 Adonai.' (Joshua 24:15)

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

To the Jew First?

Christians are to 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.³⁸ When a well meaning Christian wears a cross in the presence of a Jew, are they being sensitive to that 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 would he have been to being sensitive to the Jewish People, that he was ready to die for? ³⁹

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 the God of Israel!