

Cross

Jehovah's Witnesses claim Jesus died on an upright stake without a crossbeam. As their authority for this teaching they quote from Justus Lipsius of the 16th century. Below is a copy of the Quote taken from the *Kingdom Interlinear*, pages 1155 and 1156.

(Justus Lipsius' book *De Cruce Liber Primus*, page 647)

APPENDIX

1155

Matthew 10:38 — "torture stake"

(σταυροσ, *stau-ro's*, Greek; צלץ, *ts'lab'* or צלץ, *ts'lab'*, Hebrew; *crux*, Latin)

This is the expression used in connection with the execution of Jesus at Calvary. There is no evidence that the Greek word *stau-ro's* meant here a "cross" such as the pagans used as a religious symbol for many centuries before Christ to denote the sun-god.

In the classical Greek the word *stau-ro's* meant merely an upright stake or pole, or a pile such as is used for a foundation. The verb *stau-ro'o* meant to fence with pales, to form a stockade or palisade, and this is the verb used when the mob called for Jesus to be impaled. To such a stake or pole the person to be punished was fastened, just as when the popular Greek hero Prometheus was represented as tied to a stake or *stau-ro's*. The Greek word which the dramatist Aeschylus used to describe this means to fasten or fix on a pole or stake, to impale, and the Greek author Lucian used *o-ne-stau-ro'o* as a synonym for that word. In the Christian Greek Scriptures *o-ne-stau-ro'o* occurs but once, at Hebrews 6:6. The root verb *stau-ro'o* occurs more than 40 times, and we have rendered it "impale," with the footnote: "Or, 'fasten on a stake or pole.'"

The inspired writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures wrote in the common (*koi-ne'*) Greek and used the word *stau-ro's* to mean the same thing as in the classical Greek, namely, a stake or pole, a simple one without a crossbeam of any kind or at any angle. There is no proof to the contrary. The apostles Peter and Paul also use the word *stau-ro's* to refer to the torture instrument upon which Jesus was nailed, and this argues that it was an upright stake without a crossbeam, for that is what *stau-ro's* in this special sense means. (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24) At Ezra 6:11 we find *stau-ro's* in the Greek Septuagint (1 Esdras 6:31), and there it is spoken of as a beam on which the violator of law was to be hanged, the same as at Luke 23:39; Acts 5:30; 10:39.

The fact that *stau-ro's* is translated *crux* in the Latin versions furnishes no argument against this. Any authoritative Latin dictionary will inform the examiner that the basic meaning of *crux* is a "tree, frame, or other wooden instrument of execution" on which criminals were impaled or hanged. (Lewis-Short) A cross is only a later meaning of *crux*. Even in the writings of Livy, a Roman historian of the first century B.C., *crux* means a mere stake. Such a single stake for impalement of a criminal was called *crux simplex*, and the method of nailing him to such an instrument of torture is illustrated by the Roman Catholic scholar, Justus Lipsius, of the 16th century. We present herewith a photographic copy of his illustration on page 511, column 2, of his book *De Cruce Liber Primus*. This is the manner in which Jesus was impaled.

Religious tradition from the days of Emperor Constantine proves nothing. Says that monthly publication for the Roman Catholic clergy, *The Ecclesiastical Review*, of September, 1920, No. 3, of Baltimore, Maryland, page 273: "It may be safely asserted that only after the edict of Milan, A.D. 312, was the cross used as the permanent sign of our Redemption. De Rossi positively states that no monogram of Christ, discovered in the catacombs or other places, can be traced to a period anterior to the year 312. Even after that epoch-making year, the church, then free and triumphant, contented herself with having a simple monogram of Christ: the Greek letter *chi* vertically crossed by a *rho*, and horizontally sometimes, by an *iota*. [Ⲛⲓ] The oldest crucifix mentioned as an object of public worship is the one venerated in the Church of Narbonne in southern France, as early as the 6th century."

Rather than consider the torture stake upon which Jesus was impaled a relic to be worshiped, the Jewish Christians like Simon Peter would consider it to be an abominable

