



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Volume XIV
Issue 330

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

The Lord's Way of Giving

In Contrast to Man's Way of "Works"

by — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He giveth to His beloved while they sleep (Psalm 127:2).

God's spiritual blessings are not obtained by incessant labor – rising early and sitting up late, nor by painful and sorrowful effort. "Thus He giveth" – this is the way He gives to His beloved. How? "sleeping" or "while they sleep." The Hebrew word *sheynah* is an adverbial accusative, meaning "in sleep."



It was in this way that He gave His wondrous gifts to Solomon. His name was "Yedidiah," i.e., beloved of Jehovah (II Samuel 12:25). The word here is also "Yedeed," i.e., beloved, and this Psalm relates to Solomon, as we learn from the title. Solomon knew by a blessed experience how God gave to him His richest blessings while he was "sleeping" (I Kings 3:3-15).

Even so He gave to Adam a Bride (Genesis 2:21-22); to Abram, the everlasting Covenant (Genesis 15:12-16), and to Jedidiah "His beloved," wisdom, riches and honor. "Thus He giveth to His beloved while they sleep," when they are helpless and are unable to put forth any effort of works by which to earn the blessing, and in which the flesh might glory before God.

That no flesh should glory in His presence (I Corinthians 1:29).

How wondrously He gives! E'en while we sleep—
When we from all our "works" have ceased, and rest;
And He our life doth mercifully keep,

Then, without works, are His beloved blest.¹

Yes! "His beloved"! loved not because

Of any work which we have ever done;²

But loved in perfect grace, "without a cause";³

This is the source whence all our blessings come.

He gives in sleep! In vain we toil and strive—

And rise up early and so late take rest:

But, while our powers in sweetest sleep revive,

And we abandon all our anxious quest—

Then He bestows His gifts of grace on us,

And where we've never sown, He makes us reap

A harvest, full of richest blessing. "Thus

He gives to His beloved while they sleep."

Figures of Speech Used in the Bible

pp. 120-121, adapted

1. Romans 11:6.

2. Titus 3:5.

3. "Being justified freely by His grace" (Romans 3:24). The word "freely" here is the same word as in John 15:25, where it is rendered "without a cause" ("They hated me without a cause"). There was absolutely no cause why our blessed Lord Jesus was "hated." Even so, it is with regard to our justification: "Being justified without a cause by His grace."

The Lord's Way of Giving, in Contrast to Man's Way of Works	2999
The "Cross" - Was Christ Nailed to a "Cross"? or a "Stake"?	3001
Reader's Question Box #10: "Was Israel instructed to commit Genocide?"	3004
Our Mailbox	3005



Bible Student's Notebook™

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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The "Cross"

Was Christ Nailed to a "Cross"? or a "Stake"?

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Do the Scriptures actually teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was nailed to a "cross"?

The "Christian Cross" is the preeminent symbol of Christendom. However, most are unaware that the Greek word *stauros*, traditionally translated as "cross," primarily denotes an upright "pale" or stake.

Let's begin with a look at the word *stauros* itself. Here are some actual definitions for this Greek word:

A stake. — Robert Young¹

A stake. — Wesley J. Perschbacher²

A stake or post. — James A. Strong³

An upright stake. — Joseph Thayer⁴

An upright pointed stake. — Rick Renner⁵

An upright pale or stake. — E.W. Bullinger⁶

An upright stake or pale, without any crosspiece. — A.E. Knoch⁷

A mere stake of one single piece *without* transom [crossbar].⁸

Stauros, designated a pointed, vertical wooden stake firmly fixed in the ground. ... They were set up as instruments of torture on which serious of-

fenders of law were publicly suspended to die.⁹

There is nothing in the Greek of the New Testament even to imply two pieces of timber. — E.W. Bullinger¹⁰

Stauros denotes, primarily, an upright pale or stake. On such, malefactors were nailed for execution. Both the noun and the verb *stauroo*, to fasten to a stake or pale, are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of the two-beamed cross. The shape of the latter had its origin in ancient Chaldea, and was used as a 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 third 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 [t], was adopted to stand for the cross of Christ. — W.E. Vine¹¹

We can see from these Greek language sources that the word "cross" is just another place where *religion* has "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Romans 1:25). Our Lord Jesus Christ did not give His life for us on a "cross." He died on "a stake or post," or what is elsewhere referred to in the Scriptures as a "tree."

Who His Own self bare our sins in His Own body on the tree ... (I Peter 2:24).

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written,

1. Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*.
2. Wesley J. Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*.
3. James A. Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, #4716.
4. Joseph Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.
5. Rick Renner, *Sparkling Gems from the Greek*.
6. E.W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*.
7. A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Keyword Concordance*, p. 63.
8. *The Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

9. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 825.
10. E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 162: "The Cross and the Crucifixion."
11. W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

“Cursed is everyone who **hangs on a tree**” (Galatians 3:13).

The “cross” is not just something that religion has *corrupted* for its own purposes; it is something it *injected* as a replacement for our Savior’s “tree.” There is nothing Christian about the pagan “cross.” Genesis’ garden starts with a “Tree” of Life. Revelation ends with a “Tree” of Life. In between, our Savior provided *Life* for us on a “tree.”

Note these further references to the “cross” and its true origin.

How did the cross find its way into Christian worship? This question must seem strange to those who have ever regarded it as THE Christian Symbol. As a fact (and the evidence is so abundant) the cross is not in any sense a Christian emblem, but a notorious heathen one. It is one of the oldest and best authenticated heathen emblems known to mankind, and the era of its adoration [can be] ascertained by anyone who cares to investigate the subject dispassionately. The cross existed in Africa, Asia, America and Europe as a religious symbol quite two thousand years before the “Christian era.”¹²

In the Egyptian churches the cross was a pagan symbol of life borrowed by the Christians and in-

terpreted in the pagan manner.¹³

It never means two pieces of timber placed across one another at any angle, but always of one piece alone ... 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.¹⁴

This Pagan symbol ... the Tau, the sign of the cross, the indisputable sign of Tammuz, the false Messiah ... the mystic Tau of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) and Egyptians – the true original form of the letter T, the initial of the name of Tammuz ... the Babylonian cross was the recognized emblem of Tammuz.¹⁵

The coins of Constantine show an even-armed cross as a symbol for the Sun-god.¹⁶

It was not until Christianity began to be paganized that the cross came to be thought of as a Christian symbol. It was in 431 A.D. that crosses in churches and chambers were introduced, while the use of crosses on steeples did not come until about 586 A.D.

12. Baron Alfred Porcelli, *The Cross: Its History, Meaning and Use* (The Protestant Truth Society, 1920), p. 3.

13. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, Vol. 14, p. 273.

14. E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 162.

15. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* (Loiuzeaux Bros., 1961), pp. 197-205.

16. Johannes Geffcken, *The Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, p. 319.



Prophetic Study: Its Importance and Interpretation

by — E.W. Bullinger

There are two longer prayers in the Epistle to the Ephesians, plus a shorter concluding one. The two longer prayers have a common subject, Jesus Christ and Believers. However, in the first prayer it is what God made Christ for us; in the second it is what God has made us in Christ. In other words; in the first it is “We in Christ,” while in the second it is “Christ in Us”. Also the first prayer deals with God’s power which he wrought in Christ, while the second one deals with God’s power which is at work in us.

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In the 6th Century, the crucifix image was introduced and its worship sanctioned by the Church of Rome.¹⁷

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 ... Why then was the “cross” 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 ...

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 ...

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 the 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.” Further proof of its pagan origin is the recorded evidence of the Vestal Virgins of pagan Rome having the cross hanging on a necklace, and the Egyp-

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tians doing it too, as early as the 15th century B.C.E. The Buddhists, and numerous other sects of India, also used the sign of the cross as a mark on their followers’ heads.¹⁸

The “cross” itself, long revered as the symbol of Christ’s crucifixion, actually originated in the pagan cultures. The Aztecs who had never heard of Christ, had used the symbol of the cross centuries earlier. The translators of the New Testament mistranslated the Greek term which meant “stake” into the word “cross.” It would be more correct to say that Jesus was crucified on a big tree-like stake. It is reported, scholars and the Anglican clergy were aware of this in the Eighteenth Century. The cross was not adopted until about three hundred years after the crucifixion, and it wasn’t portrayed in Christian art until the middle of the Fifth Century ... The cross was another pagan symbol adopted and claimed by the Church.¹⁹

The crucifix – a cross, a sculpture of art, an icon of human sentiment – is as false as it can be, because our Lord was not crucified on a cross. He was crucified on a pole or a stake – an upright stake.

(see **Cross**, last page)

17. Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, p. 50.

18. *The Final Reformation* (Institute for Scripture Research).

19. Robert W. Stace, *Why Weren’t We Told?* 2001, p. 83.



Reader's Question Box #10

“Was Israel instructed to commit genocide?”

QUESTION: How is God's instruction to destroy the nations of Canaan to be harmonized with a God of love?

ANSWER: Israel was not instructed to eradicate the inhabitants of the land, but to drive them out.

*I will make all your enemies **turn their backs** to you (Exodus 23:27).*

*I will **cast out** the nations before you (Exodus 34:24).*

*To **drive out** nations from before you greater and mightier than you are (Deuteronomy 4:38).*

*To **cast out** all your enemies from before you, as the LORD hath spoken. (Deuteronomy 6:19).*

Only those who, despite warnings, remained in the country and refused to flee were at high risk of being slain (Deuteronomy 12:29). Think, for example, of the inhabitants of Jericho. The inhabitants of Canaan had been alarmed, years before, and knew that God would give the land to the people of Israel. Listen to what Rahab said to the spies:

*I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that your terror is fallen on us, and that **all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you**. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when you^p came out of Egypt; and what you^p did to the two kings of the Amorites, who [were] on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you^p utterly destroyed. **And as soon as we had heard** [these things], **our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man**, because of you: for the LORD your God, He [is] God in heaven above, and in earth beneath (Joshua 2:9-11).*

God had waited four hundred years before driving away the inhabitants of Canaan.

God had said the following to Abram:

*Know of a surety that your seed shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them **four hundred years**; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full** (Genesis 15:13-16).*

The inhabitants of the land excessively sinned by committing extreme horrors, such as bestiality, child sacrifice, etc. (Deuteronomy 18:12); but God took until the fourth generation. This was consistent with what we read:

*Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and **fourth generation of them that hate Me** (Exodus 20:5).*

The people of Israel had to wait hundreds of years for the fulfillment of the promise, just because the measure of iniquity of the Amorites was not filled to the full, earlier. The expulsion of the nations in the days of Joshua, centuries later, was a demonstration of God's patience.

The people of Israel also will be expelled, if they persistently disobey their God.

In Leviticus 18, we read the following:

*Defile not you^p yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I **cast out** before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof on it, and **the land itself vomits out her inhabitants**. You^p shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and*

1. The subscript "p" indicates 2nd person plural ("ye" in the Old English) as used in the King James Version.

(see **QUESTION**, next page)



Thanks for all the great research you present to the Body of Christ. – *MN*

Keep up the good works that God has prepared beforehand. – *Canada*

I enjoy reading the BSN you send to me via email; many things to consider. – *PA*

What you are doing is a great service to all! Keep up the good work! I love you brother. – *IN*

You are a dear gift to all of us! – *CO*

Thank you, to you and your family for “feeding” the hungry all year long! – *VA*

How often you have the right words for the right people, without your knowing it. Father, without a doubt, is leading your ministry. I am an example of how your work fosters growth and maturity. If a door opens, don’t walk through it - run! – *LA*

QUESTION (continued from previous page)

shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourns among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spews not you out also, when you defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you (:24-28).

God does not discriminate. Because of their appalling unrighteousness the heathen nations were finally put out of the land. God did the same with His chosen people: He let them go into deportation and exile. More than once this happened, that they would know that He is the LORD.

by — André Piet

Translated from Dutch by Peter Feddema

Thank you so very much for sharing your revelations on what for many of us is surely a completely new and complete way of understanding Father’s love for us. “*The truth shall set you free.*” May “*The Happy God*” continue to bless your work in 2012. – *England*

You mean a lot to all of us out here. Keep up the great work. – *IA*

Praise the Lord, for how He uses you to bless me! I am so richly blessed having brothers like yourself! Words are not adequate enough to express how much the Lord has opened up to me. The truth of the *salvation of all* was like a dam bursting and the flood waters of truth became overwhelming! God is God ... AMEN! We are one, brother ... one with our Father! – *ME*

I value you for standing for what you believe, even if others may stand against you for doing so. – *TX*

I have been enjoying all of your online resources very much. – *MI*

You are on my heart and mind often. You and your ministry have been and are a true blessing to us few here in the Pacific Northwest. – *WA*



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Now that's a historical fact. The cross is an emblem of the Christian religion, a worldwide religion, a worldwide deception ... The cross of Christianity is tainted, it's already wrong; it's only an emblem, a piece of jewelry, a status symbol that you belong to the club ... and yet Christianity is totally and emotionally in love with it – infatuated.²⁰

<><><>

THE “CROSS”

An Explanation of Its Use in the Concordant Version
by — A.E. Knoch

The “cross” has been a heavy cross for the translator of the *Concordant Version* to bear. Knowing full well that our Lord was not impaled upon a pole with a cross-piece, but on a single upright stake, he avoided the term and used “stake” for a time in his translations. Yet this proved even more unsatisfactory than the word “cross,” for a stake is not used for a large pole, as a rule, and when it is, death by burning is implied. Pale also was tried, but now it suggests a part of a fence.

Far more important than the exact form (for the cross-piece does not really alter the cause of death by nailing to an upright pole, or the resultant suffering and shame), are the spiritual thoughts which time has attached to it. It has become a standard figure of speech for trial and tribulation.

20. Martin Zender, *Crack O' Dawn Report*, #31 (2011).

“Bearing a cross” means much more than lifting a stake or a pole. The word “cross” has gathered around it so much of spiritual value that it seems sacrilegious to use the other terms, which correct only the outward, material appearance, yet discard the inward spiritual aspect.

The *Concordant Version* seeks to conform as closely as practicable to the outward form as well as the inward spirit, and, in most cases, it has been possible to do so; but when repeated efforts fail to fulfill our wishes in this regard, we fall back upon other means of revealing and guarding the truth. In the lexicon [*Keyword Concordance*] we can give the facts, and in the sublinear we can cleave closer to them than in the idiomatic version.

Those who have written, criticizing the rendering “cross” and “crucify,” seeking to correct us on this point, should consult these before writing, for these give the more exact equivalents, without observing English idiom and usage. The lexicon reads, “an upright stake or pale, without any cross-piece” (page 322), and the sublinear has “pale” throughout, with “impale” for the verb. I will gladly bear this figurative “cross” for the sake of the saints. If I translated otherwise, a much greater mob would seek to impale me; but both would probably join and cry “crucify him!” If there is a better solution we will gladly adopt it.²¹ ■

21. A.E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 42 (1951) Abridged.



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