

Conclusion

Allow me to repeat the following four points regarding the doctrine of the Trinity and the symbol of the cross.

- Both are unbelievably and out of all proportion prominent in the church and the modern world.
- Both are totally absent from the New Testament.
- Both are heathen in origin and date back to long before the time of Jesus.
- Both came into the church several centuries after the time of Jesus.

The same things are true about Christmas, Easter, church buildings, ecclesiastical hierarchies, ecclesiastical robes and much more. All of these things came from Babylonian and other ancient religions. All of these are features of an apostate church.

Surprisingly yet again, much of this was predicted in the New Testament. Jesus, Peter, Paul and John all predicted that false prophets would come among God's people. They all foresaw a future apostate church. Jesus himself predicted a massive level of deception: **"For false christ and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect"** (Matt 24:24).

The clearest prediction of the apostate church was given to John in exile on the island of Patmos. He saw the church as a revival of ancient [Babylon](#). His main vision appears in [Rev 17:1-5](#). The final words of this are, **"And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: 'Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.' And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marvelled greatly"** (Rev 17:5,6). John was gobsmacked. He could not believe what he was seeing. The simple followers of the Jesus he had known had been hijacked into a massive human organisation that tortured and murdered the real followers of Jesus and did all this all in his name.

John's final words on Babylon are, "Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities'" (Rev 18:4,5).

The Cross in History Scripture and Church

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Bible quotations are taken from the ESV or retranslated.

on their shields. They killed Maxentius and routed his army, cut off his head and carried it into Rome on a spear. Constantine became the new Roman emperor. (For more details see [Battle of Milvian Bridge](#).)

Centuries later the Crusaders went to war in like manner with large red crosses painted on their tunics to recapture the Holy Land from the infidels. They slaughtered any Jews they found on their way.

The conversion of Constantine was through a vision of a cross; the conversion of Saul of Tarsus was through a vision of Jesus. Saul became the Apostle Paul; Constantine became Roman emperor. Paul spent the rest of his life preaching and teaching about Jesus throughout the Roman empire; Constantine continued his military conquests and went on to bring paganism and pagan practices into the church.

Constantine decided that Christianity should become the religion of the entire Roman empire, but he felt free to modify it in any way he chose. Before his conversion he worshipped the sun god and he continued this practice as before. He changed the Sabbath from Saturday to **Sunday**. (The Romans had adopted the Babylonian system of naming week days after the sun, moon and five known planets. Sunday was dies Solis and Monday, dies Lunae. In Hebrew, apart from Shabbat (Sabbath), they were just first day, second day etc..) Constantine made the 25th of December, originally the *Feast of the Unconquered Sun*, into the birth of Jesus or Christmas. He hated Jews and everything Jewish and so replaced the Passover with Easter, also a heathen festival. Temples became churches.



Worse was to come. In the following centuries, the church grew in political power till it dominated Europe. As time went on it began to torture and kill all who opposed it. This included both true followers of Jesus and Jews.


We often accept things we have seen and learnt from childhood without seeing how strange they are. Most of us are so familiar with the cross that we do not see what a peculiar symbol it is for the Christian religion. If Jesus had faced a firing squad, would his followers have adopted the gun as their symbol? If he had died by the sword, would today's churches be decorated with swords? I doubt it! Then why put crosses everywhere? Strange indeed!


The only genuine symbol of the faith of Jesus is the transformed lives of his true followers.

to other parts of the world such as Syria, Egypt, Greek, Latin, India, and Mexico.”

In other words, the cross is quite simply a pagan symbol. Its origin, as a symbol, was not in the death of Jesus, but long before in many different ancient religions.

In Babylonian religion, the cross related to the god Tammuz, mentioned by Ezekiel: “**Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD, and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz**” (Ezek 8:14). The first letter of Tammuz was the Babylonian letter T or , exactly the same shape as the traditional “Christian” cross. This sign () was marked in baptism on the foreheads of those initiated into Babylonian mysteries, in exactly the same way as it is marked onto babies in traditional Christian ceremonies.

In ancient Egyptian religion, the cross was the Ankh symbol like a letter T with a circle above (). It represented eternal life.

In Hinduism, the cross had the form of a swastika () , which of course Hitler adopted as a symbol of the Arian race, from which he claimed that Germans were descended.

Many websites give copious details of crosses in ancient religions, including the World Atlas website article: [The History of the Christian Cross](#) mentioned above. I don’t need to say any more.

The Church’s Adoption of the Cross Symbol

When did the church adopt the cross as its central symbol?

Use of the cross as a symbol among Christians appears to have begun in the 2nd or 3rd century after Christ. However, it did not become widespread until the time of the emperor Constantine.

In 312 AD, the Roman general Constantine proclaimed himself emperor and marched with his army against the existing emperor, Maxentius, in Rome. They met and fought the battle of Milvian Bridge just outside Rome.

According to legend, Constantine and his army saw a cross of light in the sky above the sun with the words, “in hoc signo vince” - “in this sign conquer”. He sent his soldiers into battle with the sign of the cross

Introduction

The Trinity is the central doctrine of the Christian religion, and the cross is its universal symbol. The cross and the Trinity have four surprising, almost unbelievable features in common.

- Both are extremely prominent in the church and the modern world.
- Both are totally absent from the New Testament.
- Both are heathen in origin and date back to long before the time of Jesus.
- Both came into the church several centuries after the time of Jesus.

I have written separately on the [Doctrine of the Trinity](#), and in this writing I will look at the symbol of the cross. I will consider each of these four features in turn.

The Church and the Modern World

In the church and the modern world, the cross is surprisingly ubiquitous. You see it everywhere.

Crosses come in all shapes and sizes from less than an inch in length on ladies’ necklaces to almost 200 feet in various cities. Greek crosses, Roman crosses, Celtic crosses, Maltese crosses and St Andrew’s crosses all have different shapes.

In many churches, clergy and congregations frequently make the sign of the cross over their bodies. Often they bow to the cross when they enter the building. Babies are christened with the sign of the cross made on their foreheads.

Many churches are built in the shape of a cross and are adorned with crosses both inside and out.

In Catholic countries, crosses and crucifixes are visible everywhere and church festivals are frequently celebrated by processions carrying tall crosses for all to see.

Many beautiful English hymns have been written about the cross, especially *When I survey the wondrous cross* by Isaac Watts.

28 countries have crosses on their flags. The UK tops the list with three crosses – St Andrews Cross, St George’s Cross, and St Patrick’s Cross - on its flag.

Some athletes wear crosses to bring them luck and superstitious people believe crosses will protect them from evil.

Graveyards and cemeteries in the western world are a mass of crosses; maybe in the heathen hope that this will facilitate the journeys of their occupants to the next world!

The cross is so prominent in the church that we would expect to find the same prominence given to it in the New Testament. Let’s turn to the Bible and see.

The Bible

When we turn to the New Testament we meet two major problems.

Firstly, the Absence of the word *Cross*

The English word *cross* occurs 27 times in most English translations of the New Testament, but what about the original Greek? Surprisingly, believe it or not, it does not occur once!

The English noun *cross* is a wrong translation of the Greek noun σταυρος (stauros), which actually means an upright stake with no cross bar. The English verb *to crucify* is a wrong translation of the Greek verb σταυρω (stauroo), which of course comes from σταυρος and means to *impale on a stake*. (For full details, see Strong’s definitions of [σταυρος](#) and [σταυρω](#).)

The simple truth is that Jesus was not crucified on a cross, but impaled on or nailed to a stake.

In John 3:14, Jesus predicted the manner of his death, “**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.**” How did Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness? We can find out from Num 21:8,9, “**the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole**”. Moses did not set the serpent on a *cross*, but on a *pole* or *stake*.

Peter wrote: “**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree**”. (See [Strong’s ξυλον](#) for the Greek word translated *tree*.)

Secondly, the Absence of the Cross Symbol

The New Testament contains absolutely no record of the cross ever being used as a symbol.

Church buildings in the New Testament never had crosses on them because there were no church buildings! Quite simply the New Testament church had no images or icons, including no crosses. No one needed or wanted them. Faith in Jesus was an internal matter of the heart. All the external things came later.

Paul did actually use visual aids to explain the death of Jesus. He said so in Gal 3:1 where he wrote, “**O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.**” What was the visual aid? It wasn’t a PowerPoint presentation and I don’t believe it was a carving of a cross. It was something much better. It was the life of Paul himself. He manifested in his own life the death and resurrection of Jesus. He was the visual aid!

The 2nd Commandment reads, “**Do not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth**” (Ex 20:8). The cross is a **carved image** of the wooden structure on which most people believe Jesus died.

We must return to the fiery serpent which Moses set upon a pole. We read in 2Kgs 18:4, nearly 1000 years later, that “**King Hezekiah removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it**”. How did he dare to destroy so sacred an object of such antiquity? An incredible act of bravery!

The origin of the cross symbol was not in the New Testament, but much earlier as we will now see.

The Origin of the Cross Symbol

According to the World Atlas, “A vast body of evidence shows that the cross was used centuries before the birth of Christianity. The cross is thought to have originated from the ancient Babylonians before its spread