

# Is the Cross a Pagan Symbol?



According to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Jesus was crucified on a torture stake. The cross is believed to be a pagan symbol, added in later centuries to attract pagan peoples to an untrue form of Christianity.

When a group or person asserts something about Jesus, we should always verify it with the Bible. In Watchtower publications, Jesus is depicted as dying on a stake, with one nail through both hands. Unfortunately, this is not an accurate representation.

In John 20:25 (NWT), Thomas says, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails and stick my finger into the print of the nails and stick my hand into his side, I will certainly not believe.” Thomas knew in what manner Jesus was crucified, including that Jesus had been speared, and he’s very clear in saying there was more than one nail in his hands. Clearly the Watchtower is confused on this point. If there were nails (plural) through Jesus’ hands, the natural conclusion is that there was a cross beam. The Watchtower misrepresents the Bible every time it publishes a picture showing Jesus with only one nail through his hands.

Further evidence comes from Matthew 27:37, which says, “And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” Surely if Jesus was crucified as depicted in Watchtower literature, Matthew 27:37 would say that the sign was hung above Jesus’ hands—but it doesn’t. The sign was hung above his head, consistent with how it would be explained if Jesus was crucified on a cross.

Still, is the cross a pagan symbol? We do know from history that the Romans who crucified Jesus were pagans. Do some people make the cross or crucifixes into idols? Certainly, some people do, but that isn’t what God intended and He clearly disapproves of idolatry. Because people have misused the cross does not negate its existence. (If you’re interested in more information, take a look at [www.jwfacts.com/index\\_files/cross.htm](http://www.jwfacts.com/index_files/cross.htm) for some archaeological and medical evidence for the cross.)

The important thing to note is that the Bible contains the truth. Consider this: If the Watchtower doesn’t present the truth that we find in the Bible, is it a true agency of Jehovah?

There’s another very important fact about Jesus that the Bible makes clear.

Jesus is Jehovah in the fullest sense; Jesus was not simply “a god.” Like Thomas, we can declare Jesus to be our Lord and our *God* (John 20:28). (Thomas, as a good Jew, would never call Michael the archangel his God.)

Yes, the Watchtower disagrees with this. But consider first what the Bible says. Jesus said the greatest act of love a person can perform is to lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). According to the Watchtower, Jehovah is incapable of performing a greater act of love than His created being. But according to the Bible, Jehovah didn’t send a lesser spiritual creature. He performed this act of love *Himself*.

Jehovah is not only perfectly loving, but also perfectly just and holy. He cannot stand sin. There is no perfect sacrifice apart from Jehovah; no animal, man, or angel could ever cover all sin. And that is why Jesus died—not while we were His friends, but while we were His enemies (Romans 5:8, Colossians 1:21). We can measure ourselves by God’s holy law:

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet.

Perhaps you’ve sincerely dedicated yourself to Jehovah and seek to obey Him daily. But James 2:10 says, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” At some point, we’ve stumbled, and sinned against an infinitely holy God. And that means we are sinners with desperately wicked hearts (Jeremiah 17:9). The Bible says that no one seeks God. No one is righteous. We have all become worthless (Romans 3:10–12).

Our penalty for sin is infinite (Daniel 12:2, Matthew 25:46, 2 Thess. 1:8–9, Revelation 14:11, 21:8). In order for justice to be served by a perfectly just God, our infinite penalty must be paid. If Jesus is merely an angel, his blood is not of infinite value, and is not adequate payment.

Please consider the Jesus the Bible describes who only can fully pay the penalty for our sins. If you believe the Bible is true, read it honestly and carefully. Ask Jehovah to reveal to you what He wants you to know. Consider His gracious offer to make you spiritually alive and live forever with Him if you repent of your sins and trust in Jesus as God, as Thomas did. Trust that His blood was totally sufficient to pay the penalty of your sins, and receive His gift of salvation. This will make a difference for today—and for eternity.