

## Bible Study Notes

# Did Jesus Christ Die on a Cross or a Stake? The Traditional Church of God Position

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### Introductory Remarks

The traditional Christian belief holds that Jesus Christ was crucified on a cross, typically depicted as a T- or †-shaped structure. However, a minority of scholars, focusing on the Greek term *stauros*—commonly translated as *cross* but originally meaning an upright stake or pole—argue that Jesus was executed on a simple upright stake, known as a *crux simplex*. This document examines key scholarly works supporting the stake hypothesis, based on linguistic, historical, and archaeological evidence, and contrasts these with the mainstream view favouring a cross.

The upright stake view is also one long held by the old Worldwide Church of God (WCG) (including offshoots) and Jehovah's Witnesses.

### Scholarly Arguments for Crucifixion on a Stake

Several academic works challenge the traditional cross view, emphasising the primary meaning of *stauros* as an upright pole without a large crossbeam. Below is a selection of key sources advocating this perspective:

- Hermann Fulda, *Das Kreuz und die Kreuzigung: Eine antiquarische Untersuchung (The Cross and the Crucifixion: An Antiquarian Investigation)*:  
Fulda argues that Roman execution practices and Biblical language point to a simple upright stake. He suggests the cross shape emerged later as a Christian symbol, distinct from the original execution method.
- Henry Dana Ward, *History of the Cross: The Pagan Origin, and the Growth of the Cross in Christianity*:  
Ward asserts that Jesus was executed on a single wooden post or pale. He contends that the cross was a pagan symbol later integrated into Christianity, stating, "The instrument was a single upright pale or wooden post, not the two-beamed cross."
- Ethelbert Bullinger, *The Companion Bible* (appendix on "The Cross"):  
He maintains that *stauros* in the New Testament consistently refers to an upright stake. He writes, "The Greek word *stauros* denotes an upright pale or stake, to which malefactors were nailed, with no implication of two intersecting beams."
- William Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (entry on "cross, crucify"):  
His famous work defines *stauros* as "primarily an upright pale or stake," used for executions, and distinguishes it from the later ecclesiastical cross form adopted by Christianity.

- Gunnar Samuelsson, *Crucifixion in Antiquity: An Inquiry into the Background of the New Testament Terminology of Crucifixion*:  
Samuelsson examines over 1,000 ancient texts and concludes that there is "insufficient pre-Christian or New Testament evidence to confirm a cross shape." He argues that *stauros* could refer to a simple stake or other execution structures, challenging traditional reconstructions.
- Robin Jensen, *The Cross: History, Art, and Controversy*:  
Jensen notes the ambiguity of *stauros*, stating, "The Greek term *stauros* allows for the possibility that Christ died on a simple stake, not necessarily a cross with a transverse beam."
- Joel B. Green, *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*:  
Green highlights the lack of specificity in early accounts of crucifixion, noting that the terminology "does not definitively indicate a crossbeam, leaving room for a stake or pole."
- Bible Archaeological Society staff in "Roman Crucifixion Methods Reveal the History of Crucifixion":  
This article explores the terms *stauros* and *crux simplex*, citing ancient sources like Seneca to support the interpretation of an upright stake.
- Jehovah's Witnesses Publications such as Joseph Rutherford's *Riches*:  
In this book Rutherford states on page 27: "Jesus was crucified, not on the cross, but on an upright stake." Another is *The Golden Age* (magazine, predecessor to *Awake!*): "Jesus died on a stake, not on a cross." (p. 72). Further references to this position can be found in their *The Watchtower* and *New World Translation*.

These sources collectively emphasise the linguistic roots of *stauros* and the variability of Roman execution methods, which did not always involve a crossbeam.

However, mainstream scholarship, including works by John Granger Cook (John Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, No. 327) and David Chapman (*Ancient Jewish and Christian Perceptions of Crucifixion. Scientific studies on the New Testament 2nd series (WUNT II) No. 244, 2008*), often support the cross based on early Church Fathers' writings and limited archaeological evidence. Others include "Ancient Crucifixion Figures", *Biblical Archaeology Society*, 15 March 2015 and Ben Witherington, "Biblical Views: Images of Crucifixion: Fresh Evidence", *Biblical Archaeology Society*, March/April 2013.

Clear back to the nineteenth century, if not before, non-mainstream groups including Sabbatarians rejected the notion that Christ died on a cross, accepting instead that He died on a stake.

NB: the following five quotes are all from non-Sabbatarian groups:

- "The Manner of Christ's Death", *The Restitution Herald*, Vol. 15, No. 12, c1867, pp.1-4:  
"Christ did not die on a cross, as the pagans and papists would have it, but on a stake (*stauros*), as the Greek plainly states. The cross is a symbol of idolatry introduced centuries later."

- "Pagan Influences in Christianity", *The Bible Advocate*, Vol. 22, No. 8, 1875, pp. 2-3:  
"The Savior was impaled on a single upright stake, not the cross-beam device of Roman execution mythologized by Constantine. Scripture uses *stauros* for stake, and he expired thereon." [NB: this is not the Bible Advocate issued by the Church of God (Seventh Day)].
- "The True Emblem of the Atonement", *The Restitution*, March 1882, pp.4-6:  
"Jesus Christ our Lord died upon a stake, fulfilling Deuteronomy 21:23 -the tree of curse - not the transverse cross of heathen origin."
- "Historical Notes on the Cross Myth" (appendix in reports), *Church of God General Conference Reports. 1895 Conference Report*, pp. 80-90:  
"We affirm Christ was fastened to a stake, as per the original text, rejecting the cross as a later corruption."
- "Examination of Galatians 3:13", *The Advocate of Bible Freedom*, Vol. 4, No. 5, 1901, pp. 3-5:  
"Being made a curse by hanging on a tree (stake), not the fabricated cross of tradition—Christ died on the simple pole of execution."

### **Arguments for Crucifixion on a Tree**

John Keyser is one author of several who attempts to prove that Christ died on a tree. See his *Cross of Christ* (2010).

Admittedly, the Bible does not provide a detailed account of the exact position of Jesus' arms while he was crucified, nor does it clarify the specific form of the execution device (such as a cross or a stake). Nevertheless, some verses offer insights that have been historically interpreted concerning crucifixion methods of which authors such as Keyser believes refers to a tree, suggesting suggests arms raised upwards on a tree rather than extended outwards on a cross.

Advocates for the tree interpretation, often belief the crucifixion occurred on an almond tree.

However, would an almond tree be sufficiently large? Its trunk could potentially be utilised, but would it possess the necessary height and size? Admittedly there exists an apocryphal tradition suggesting that Christ was crucified on an almond tree. Let history talk: it is likely that the Romans favoured larger, trees that were readily available such as pine or cedar for the purpose of crucifixions as far as I can make out from readings.

Consider that the mention of Jesus Christ being crucified on a "tree" in certain Scriptures, including Acts 5:30, Acts 10:39, Acts 13:29, Galatians 3:13, and 1 Peter 2:24, should be viewed both historically and theologically (including metaphors). The Greek term frequently translated as "tree" in these verses is *xylon*, which can signify "wood," "timber," or "tree." This term was sometimes used interchangeably with *stauros*. In the immediate context (Greco-Roman), a cross was typically constructed from wooden beams or a pole, which originate from a tree, thus making the term "tree" a description of the place one was executed and resultantly also serves as a metaphor for the stake. Christ obviously bore a stake to the location where it was erected, and He was subsequently hung upon it, rather than on a tree.

Recall that The Gospels describes Simon of Cyrene being compelled by Roman soldiers to assist Christ in carrying the pole to Golgotha (the place of crucifixion). This is recorded in three of the four Gospels: Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26. While John 19:17 only notes that Christ "... he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha" without mentioning Simon, suggesting Jesus initially carried it but needed help later due to exhaustion from flogging and beatings.

Physically it became too difficult for our Saviour to continue carrying the stake and help was required with Simon continuing the painful journey to the execution site. These sites had pre-dug holes to insert the stake. As these stakes weighed around 34-57 kilograms (75-125 pounds) and no cross beam was implied. Nor was a tree implied which seems self-evident from the context.

### **Old Church of God articles**

The WCG historically taught that Jesus Christ was not crucified on a traditional cross (with a crossbeam) but rather impaled on an upright stake (*stauros*). This view stemmed from interpretation of biblical Greek terminology, rejection of the cross as a pagan symbol adopted by later Christianity and likely early Church of God (Seventh Day) and Jehovah Witness writings.

Andrew Dugger, prominent Church of God (Seventh Day) leader from the 1920/30s used the term *stake* in his 1936 book *The Bible Home Instructor: A Grouping Together of Bible Testimony on All Subjects of Sacred Interest and Importance* co-authored with Clarence Dodd. In the section on the timing of the crucifixion, under "The Time Christ Hung Upon the Cross" he wrote:

"Between what hours of the day was Christ hanging on **the stake**, before He died? 'Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour' (Matt. 27:45)." (p. 189)

However, he uses the word *cross* on page 187 showing some flexibility in using the terms, but the movement away from mainstream acceptance of this and other teachings was underway in the Church of God, and this one aspect demonstrates that movement. This continuing growth in knowledge was inherited by and extended by Herbert W Armstrong and the old Worldwide Church of God.

Below are extracts from several old WCG articles on the subject:

- William Dankenbring, What Was Really "Nailed to the Cross"? *The Good News*, August 1972, p. 12:  
"NINETEEN hundred years ago, on a stony slab of ground jutting upward near Jerusalem, a young man was nailed to an **upright stake**, suffering a uniquely harsh form of execution." - "When He was nailed to that **stake**, what else was nailed there?" - "In His Person, OUR SINS were 'nailed to the **cross**, or **stake**.'" - "None of the laws, statutes, or ordinances of God were nailed to that **upright stake**." - "Jesus Christ was nailed there, bearing our sins upon Himself!"
- David Antion, "Do You Glory in the Cross of Christ?" *The Good News*, January 1975, p. 13:  
"The Romans adopted this gruesome form of death from the Phoenicians, who actually impaled their victims on a straight, **upright post**. From this cruel practice came the Greek word *stauros*, which means an **upright stake**. However, the Romans used a **cross** (Latin, *crux*) with

crossbeams." - "Then the victim was forced to carry his own heavy **cross** to the site of the crucifixion. Afterwards came the painful process of nailing his hands and feet **to the cross.**"

- Herman Hoeh, "It DOES Matter Which Days We Observe!" *The Good News*, August 1975, p. 9:  
"Notice that Christ was **nailed to the stake or cross**. He bore our sins."
- James Lichtenstein, Jesus Christ's Last Sermon, *The Good News*, February 1983, p. 6:  
"Jesus Christ, God's only Son, spent His final hours of human life on earth **nailed to a stake**, despised and rejected by the humanity He created and came to serve." - "**From the stake at Calvary**, Jesus' thoughts reached above the pain and rejection by the people He had given His life to serve." - "Jesus spoke seven times **from the stake** — three times to God, four times to those nearby." - "The chief priests, scribes and elders mocked Him, pretending they would believe in Him if He would come down **from the stake** and save Himself from death."

However, one will find the word cross in the title of a number of WCG articles extending back to the 1950s.

## Conclusions

The debate over whether Jesus Christ died on a cross or a stake hinges on the interpretation of the Greek term *stauros* and the historical context of Roman crucifixion. While the traditional view dominates Christian iconography and theology, a minority of scholars present compelling arguments for a simple upright stake. Works by Fulda, Ward, Bullinger, Vine, and Samuelsson, among others, highlight the ambiguity of *stauros* and suggest that the cross shape may reflect later ecclesiastical developments rather than historical reality. Although mainstream scholarship leans toward the cross, the stake hypothesis remains a valid alternative, supported by philological and historical analysis.

It is clear that the traditional stance of the Churches of God for decades has been correct and should be both supported and continued.

## Appendix. The Greek word *stauros* occurrences in the New Testament

The below is from an internet search.

The Greek word **σταυρός** (*stauros*), meaning "cross" or "stake," appears in several passages in the New Testament, primarily in reference to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ or the metaphorical "cross" of discipleship. Below is a comprehensive list of every New Testament verse where the word **σταυρός** is used, based on the Greek text (e.g., Nestle-Aland or Textus Receptus). The list includes the verse references and the context in which **σταυρός** appears, with translations generally aligned with standard English versions like the NIV or ESV for clarity.

### New Testament Verses Containing **σταυρός**:

1. **Matthew 10:38**
  - **Greek:** ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος.
  - **Translation:** "Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me."
  - **Context:** Jesus speaks of the cost of discipleship, using "cross" metaphorically to represent the burdens and sacrifices of following Him.
2. **Matthew 16:24**

- **Greek:** Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔλθειν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι.
  - **Translation:** "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'"
  - **Context:** Similar to Matthew 10:38, Jesus emphasizes self-denial and bearing one's "cross" as a condition of discipleship.
3. **Matthew 27:32**
- **Greek:** Ἐξερχόμενοι δὲ εὗρον ἄνθρωπον Κυρηναῖον, ὄνομα Σίμωνα· τοῦτον ἠγγάρευσαν ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ.
  - **Translation:** "As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross."
  - **Context:** Refers to the literal cross of Jesus, which Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry to the site of crucifixion.
4. **Matthew 27:40**
- **Greek:** λέγοντες· Ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις οἰκοδομῶν, σῶσον σεαυτὸν· εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, κατὰβηθι ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ.
  - **Translation:** "And saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!'"
  - **Context:** Mockers at the crucifixion challenge Jesus to come down from the cross, referring to the literal cross on which He was crucified.
5. **Matthew 27:42**
- **Greek:** Ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι· βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν, καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, καὶ πιστεύσομεν ἐπ' αὐτόν.
  - **Translation:** "He saved others, but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him."
  - **Context:** Further mockery at the crucifixion, again referencing the literal cross.
6. **Mark 8:34**
- **Greek:** Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι.
  - **Translation:** "Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'"
  - **Context:** Parallel to Matthew 16:24, Jesus speaks of taking up one's cross as part of discipleship.
7. **Mark 15:21**
- **Greek:** Καὶ ἀγγαρεύουσιν παράγοντά τινα Σίμωνα Κυρηναῖον, ἐρχόμενον ἀπ' ἀγροῦ, τὸν πατέρα Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Ῥούφου, ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ.
  - **Translation:** "A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross."
  - **Context:** Parallel to Matthew 27:32, describing Simon of Cyrene carrying Jesus' cross.
8. **Mark 15:30**
- **Greek:** σῶσον σεαυτὸν καταβάς ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ.
  - **Translation:** "Come down from the cross and save yourself!"
  - **Context:** Mockers at the crucifixion, similar to Matthew 27:40, challenge Jesus to save Himself by coming down from the cross.
9. **Mark 15:32**
- **Greek:** Ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν.

- **Translation:** "Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."
- **Context:** Similar to Matthew 27:42, the mockers demand Jesus descend from the cross.

**10. Luke 9:23**

- **Greek:** Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς πάντας· Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεσθαι, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν, καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι.
- **Translation:** "Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'"
- **Context:** Parallel to Matthew 16:24 and Mark 8:34, with the addition of "daily," emphasizing ongoing commitment.

**11. Luke 14:27**

- **Greek:** Ὅστις οὐ βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναι μου μαθητής.
- **Translation:** "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."
- **Context:** Jesus underscores the cost of discipleship, using the cross as a symbol of sacrifice.

**12. Luke 23:26**

- **Greek:** Καὶ ὡς ἀπήγαγον αὐτόν, ἐπιλαβόμενοι Σίμωνός τινος Κυρηναίου ἐρχομένου ἀπὸ ἀγροῦ, ἐπέθηκαν αὐτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν φέρειν ὀπισθεν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.
- **Translation:** "As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus."
- **Context:** Parallel to Matthew 27:32 and Mark 15:21, describing Simon carrying Jesus' cross.

**13. John 19:17**

- **Greek:** Καὶ βαστάζων ἑαυτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν ἐξήλθεν εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου Τόπον, ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστὶ Γολγοθᾶ.
- **Translation:** "Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha)."
- **Context:** Describes Jesus initially carrying His own cross to the place of crucifixion.

**14. John 19:19**

- **Greek:** Ἐγραψεν δὲ καὶ τίτλον ὁ Πιλάτος καὶ ἔθηκεν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ· ἦν δὲ γεγραμμένον· Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.
- **Translation:** "Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."
- **Context:** Refers to the sign placed on Jesus' cross during the crucifixion.

**15. John 19:25**

- **Greek:** Εἰστήκεισαν δὲ παρὰ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ, καὶ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ.
- **Translation:** "Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene."
- **Context:** Describes the women standing near Jesus' cross during His crucifixion.

**16. John 19:31**

- **Greek:** Οἱ οὖν Ἰουδαῖοι, ἵνα μὴ μείνη ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ τὰ σώματα ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ...
- **Translation:** "Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath..."

- **Context:** Refers to the crosses (plural) on which Jesus and the two criminals were crucified, with a focus on removing the bodies before the Sabbath.

**17. 1 Corinthians 1:17**

- **Greek:** Οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλέν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλὰ εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
- **Translation:** "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."
- **Context:** Paul refers to the cross of Christ metaphorically as the central message of the gospel, emphasizing its power.

**18. 1 Corinthians 1:18**

- **Greek:** Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις Θεοῦ ἐστίν.
- **Translation:** "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
- **Context:** Paul contrasts the world's view of the cross with its divine significance for believers.

**19. Galatians 5:11**

- **Greek:** Ἐγὼ δέ, ἀδελφοί, εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω, τί ἔτι διώκομαι; ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ.
- **Translation:** "Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished."
- **Context:** Paul refers to the "offense of the cross," the stumbling block caused by the gospel's message of salvation through Christ's crucifixion.

**20. Galatians 6:12**

- **Greek:** Ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπήσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται.
- **Translation:** "Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ."
- **Context:** Paul criticizes those who avoid persecution by diluting the message of the cross.

**21. Galatians 6:14**

- **Greek:** Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...
- **Translation:** "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
- **Context:** Paul expresses his sole boast in the cross, symbolizing the transformative power of Christ's sacrifice.

**22. Ephesians 2:16**

- **Greek:** Καὶ ἀποκατάλλαξεν τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ Θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἀποκτείναν τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ.
- **Translation:** "And in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."
- **Context:** The cross is the means by which Christ reconciled Jews and Gentiles, ending hostility through His sacrifice.

**23. Philippians 2:8**

- **Greek:** Καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἑταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

- **Translation:** "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"
- **Context:** Describes Jesus' humility and obedience, culminating in His death on the cross.

**24. Philippians 3:18**

- **Greek:** Πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὐς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
- **Translation:** "For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ."
- **Context:** Paul laments those who oppose the message of the cross, living contrary to its values.

**25. Colossians 1:20**

- **Greek:** Καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκατάλλαξι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ...
- **Translation:** "And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."
- **Context:** The cross is central to Christ's work of reconciling all things to God through His sacrificial death.

**26. Colossians 2:14**

- **Greek:** Ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν, ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν, καὶ αὐτὸ ἦρεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου, προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ.
- **Translation:** "Having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."
- **Context:** The cross is where Christ canceled the debt of sin, metaphorically nailing the record of sins to it.

**27. Hebrews 12:2**

- **Greek:** Ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν, ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς ὑπέμεινεν σταυρὸν αἰσχύνης καταφρονήσας...
- **Translation:** "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame..."
- **Context:** Jesus endured the literal cross, despising its shame, for the joy of accomplishing salvation.

**Notes:**

- **Total Occurrences:** The word **σταυρός** appears **27 times** in the New Testament across the verses listed above.
- **Contexts:** The term is used in two primary ways:
  1. **Literal:** Referring to the physical cross on which Jesus (and others) were crucified (e.g., Matthew 27:32, John 19:17).
  2. **Metaphorical:** Symbolizing the cost of discipleship (e.g., Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23) or the theological significance of Christ's sacrifice (e.g., 1 Corinthians 1:18, Galatians 6:14).
- **Textual Basis:** The list is based on standard Greek New Testament texts (e.g., Nestle-Aland 28). No significant textual variants affect the presence of **σταυρός** in these verses.
- **Translation:** The translations provided are from the NIV or ESV for consistency, but the Greek text is referenced to ensure accuracy in identifying **σταυρός**.

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