

**WAKE
UP!**

YHWH:

**THE SIGN
ON THE
CROSS**

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This document is an attachment to the book *Wake Up! God's Prophetic Calendar* in Timelines and Feasts. It should therefore be studied together with the book, since this document contains many references to subjects covered there.

For more information see: www.wakeup.community

For Bible references the translator has used the New King James Bible throughout this document, unless mentioned otherwise.

THE SIGN ON THE CROSS



YHWH: The Sign on the Cross

In the book *Wake Up!*, we discuss the way in which the Gospel of John looks at the plaque that was nailed above Jesus Christ on the Cross. Pontius Pilate ¹ personally dictated the text for this plaque and John tells us that the sign carried the message, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, that Jesus of Nazareth was the King of the Jews. ² At that time, Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire which made Rome the authority for the appointing of kings. ³ The fact that Pilate himself insisted that Jesus be called the King of the Jews, indicates that this unofficial title was meant sarcastically. It also gives insight regarding what Pilate really thought about the Jews given the fact he could not find guilt in Jesus.

Because the Gospel of John was written in Greek, we cannot know for certain what was literally written in Hebrew. When we compare the different gospels, we can see that John's report gives more information in this respect than the others. That is not surprising as tradition says that he was the only disciple present at the Cross at Golgotha.

In *Wake Up!*, we assert that the Hebrew message read as, "Yeshua HaNotzri Wemelech HaYehudim," and that the acronym of this spells YHWH, the four letters for God. ⁴ The question might be raised, was this a momentary impression Pilate received from God or was John trying to tell us something here?

Some propose that the plaque probably didn't say "Wemelech" (king), but "HaMelech," (the king). This difference doesn't matter in regard to the content of the message, but it changes the acronym so that the four letters of God weren't present. Then the YHWH theory would become farfetched.

We'd like to delve into this topic a bit more deeply here for our multi-lingual Bible readers. There are indeed interesting clues surrounding this remarkable YHWH inscription on the Cross, written by a ruler who, although he had no intention of connecting the crucified man to God, apparently did not get the final say in the matter.

Shalom Ben Chorin was one of the greatest German Judaic thinkers of our time.

¹ Roman prefect of the province of Judea at the time of Christ's crucifixion.

² John 19:19-20.

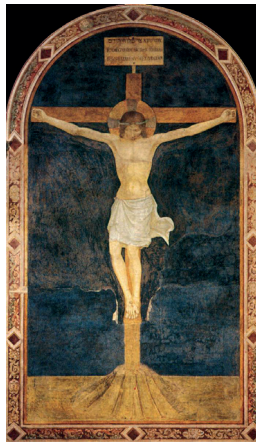
³ Herod Antipas was king at the time and found no guilt in Jesus.

⁴ Note: Hebrew reads right to left.

He worked on the Jewish-Christian dialogue and wrote the bestseller *Bruder Jesus*,¹ where he describes Jesus as his Jewish brother. As a non-Messianic Jew², Shalom asserts that “Wemelech (king) was the word written on the plaque, and further, he also acknowledges that the name of YHWH was mentioned on the Cross.

Why would Shalom Ben Chorin think that YHWH was written there? Most likely because the Jewish elite were insulted when they read the Pilate’s inscription. The problem for this elite wasn’t simply due to the message that Jesus was crucified as King of the Jews; Pilate’s words were just meant as sarcasm as the Jews had no king at the time. Apart from the high priests gnashing their teeth as they and the Jewish people were ridiculed, something else was happening: the very religious high priests wanted to prevent Pilate from writing this, most certainly because they immediately recognized the acronym³ YHWH in the Hebrew.

Shalom Ben Chorin is not alone in his thinking. The famous 15th century Renaissance painter, Fra Angelico⁴ (1395-1445), painted a fresco of Jesus hanging on the Cross with the words “Yeshua HaNotzri Wemelech HaYehudim” depicted on the Cross!



Fra Angelico – The crucified Christ; San Domenico, Fiesole

1 *Bruder Jesus der Nazarener in Jüdischer sicht*, Shalom Ben Chorin. 1977, p.180. See also *The Quest for the True Quest* by Carsten Peter, Thiede and Matthew D’Acona (Orion Books, 2000).

2 Although he spent a great deal of time seeking to understand Christian thought, he did not believe that Yeshua was the Messiah. Jewish people believe in a future Messiah, but not that Yeshua already was and is this Messiah.

3 Word spelled by putting together the first letter of each of the four words.

4 For Catholics he was not the least painter, The pope declared Fra Angelico a saint in 1982.

As we've said, the Gospels were originally written in Greek. This raises the question of whether these original texts contain evidence to support the idea that the Hebrew words indeed were "Yeshua HaNotzri Wemelech HaYehudim." We won't go into too much detail, but we would like to note a few things regarding some linguistic aspects of the Greek. Texts show us that the Greek read as:

Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων

Phonetic: I-èsoes ho Natzoraios ho basileus toon I-oedaion ¹

In these lines we see the "ὁ" twice, being both times the Greek letter omicron. ² This "ὁ" is generally translated as "the," which thus leads to a translation of "Yeshua the Nazarene ³, the King of the Jews." ⁴ However, this can differ depending on the context. ⁵ Some translations say,

"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ⁶

In both of these cases, the Hebrew would be,

"Yeshua HaNotzri Hamelech HaYehudim."

However, responses from Jewish scholars seem to indicate that Pilate actually wrote,

"Jesus of Nazareth and King of the Jews." ⁷

If this was the case, then they indeed read,

"Yeshua HaNotzri Wemelech HaYehudim," or

יהוה־מלך הבצרי ישו

יהוה are thus the four Hebrew letters for YHWH.

¹ The Interlinear KJV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English, Alfred Marshall, p. 333.

² We pronounce this letter as "ho" due to the symbol above the letter.

³ The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible, Merrill C. Tenney (Editor), Vol. 4, pp. 387-388.

⁴ NASB, AB.

⁵ *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, pp. 1193-1195.

⁶ KJV and NIV.

⁷ Or Jesus the Nazarene **and** King of the Jews.



Professor Paul A. Miller, director of the GRAMCORG Institute¹ in Vancouver explains that the “ו” can be translated as “and” when used in a list. In this same manner of listing in English, we usually use commas to separate the items as, for example, in “His Royal Highness, Ferdinand the Great, Sovereign Ruler and Protector of the People, and King of the Islands.” We use a comma instead of writing “the” each time (although this would also be grammatically possible) and before the last item in the list, we connect it using the word “and.” In Greek, the “ו” is used after each word. With this in mind, Professor Miller believes it is therefore possible that “Wemelech” (king) was written in the Hebrew, and not “Hamelech” (the king).²

So far we have focused on the linguistic aspects of the text. Earlier we also observed the Jewish elites’ strong adverse reactions to Pilate’s words that supports the theory that YHWH was seen in the plaque hanging above Yeshua.

While Pilate wrote these words with wrong intentions,³ it nevertheless was as if God was writing His Name on His Passover Lamb. But there is yet another connection when we look at things in this context:

In preparation for the Passover, each family would select an unblemished male lamb on Nisan 10. To make sure it was unblemished, the lamb was examined for four days. A bronze plaque engraved with the family’s name was then hung around each lamb’s neck.⁴ Everyone could see who the lamb belonged to. The families brought their lambs to the temple to show God they were present for Passover. One of Wake Up’s goals is to bring Old Testament shadow images into the light of present day reality in

¹ Gramcord.org is a non-profit organization providing computer-assisted Biblical studies tools.

² *The Rod of an Almond Tree in God’s Master Plan*, Peter and Christie Michas with Robert Vander Maten, chapter 10

³ John 19:22.

⁴ *A Cacophony of Treasured Finds*, B.J.Cline Woodruff, p. 167.

Jesus Christ, as well as to give attention to how Jesus, in the New Testament, shows us how He is the fulfillment of these Old Testament shadows. With this in mind, we'd like to pose the question: If the Old Testament shadow Passover lamb bore the name of the one who owned him, whose name would have been shown on the Passover Lamb for the World (Yeshua) who was the final sacrifice for us? How and where would this name be made visible? We would say, this would indeed be made visible at the place where the Passover Lamb was sacrificed for the world, the Cross. Is it so surprising to conclude that the name YHWH, made visible on the Cross, was the confirmation that Jesus Christ truly died as God's Pesach Lamb?¹ God showed all of humanity that His Son was His Lamb for the world, the Passover Lamb.

Was it not correct that the Apostle John began his Gospel by saying that Jesus is the Word, that He became human, and that He was and is God? Did John not also write that Jesus Himself said, "The Father and I are One"?

¹ See also Jewish Studies for Christians, the official blog of Dr. Eli Litzorkin-Eyzenberg (Research Professor of Ancient Cultures and Dean of Jewish Studies at the Biblical Academy of Linguistics and Historical Studies. See also the article and commentary on, "The Sign on the Cross" by Judith Green, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. <http://jewishstudies.eteacherbiblical.com>.