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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **What was written above the cross of Jesus?**

This may sound sort of strange, but the Moslem community uses this question in an effort to discredit the Bible. Moslems believe the Bible has been corrupted thru the centuries and is no longer reliable. In an effort to show the Bible is unreliable, they refer people to the sign which was hung on the cross of Jesus. Notice carefully the following passages of scripture:

### **Matthew 27:37**

37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

### **Mark 15:26**

26 And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

### **Luke 23:38**

38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

### **John 19:19**

19 Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

You will notice that the wording in each passage is slightly different than the other three passages. If the Bible is reliable and inerrant, how can these reports of the inscription above the head of Jesus all be accurate.

First, notice they all have one thing in common. They all have the words: "***King of the Jews.***"

Next, notice an important clue given in the gospel of John:

### **John 19:20**

20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Pilate, the Roman governor, probably wrote the first line in Latin (his native language). Underneath the Latin he may have then written in Greek and added the name of Jesus and the city He belonged to, since the Greek inscription would have been more widely read by bystanders of various races – Greek being the most widely spoken language of that day. Finally, underneath the Greek would have come the Hebrew or Aramaic.

Since Matthew was writing for the Jewish people, he probably quoted what the sign said in its Hebrew or Aramaic form. Mark wrote his gospel for the Romans and would therefore have quoted the Latin rendering. John worked more with Greek speaking people and would probably have quoted the line written in Greek. Luke wrote for Gentiles and would probably have been inclined to quote the Latin as Mark did. The only difference between Mark and Luke is that Luke added the words "this is" before the words "King of the Jews." Mark simply left off the demonstrative pronoun in his description.

Therefore, the three different languages used in writing the sign account for the different wordings found in the gospel accounts. There is no contradiction among the inspired writers and this example, used by Moslems, is an embarrassment to their cause. The Bible once again proves itself to be reliable and trustworthy.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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