

**SNAKE ON A TREE**



**SNAKE FOR ME?**

**M**aybe you have wondered, as you walked into the doctor's office, "Why the snakes on a pole, at a place where I want to get healthy?" Thousands of years ago, it was so, that if a person got bitten by a poisonous viper, they could go to a certain place where they could just "see" a snake fashioned from bronze and placed high on a pole—they would live! It was a special snake—so special that still today every medical doctor displays the "snake on a pole" symbol in front of his/her office so you will know that this is where to come for healing. The history of the symbol is also a promise of healing for us today!

Over three thousand years ago as Moses led the children of Israel through the wilderness, following their exodus from Egyptian bondage, the people spoke against God and against Moses. Because of their sin, God sent fiery serpents and they bit the people and many died. So the people came to Moses and said, We have

sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and you; intercede with the Lord, that He may remove the serpents from us. And Moses interceded for the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he shall live. ***"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived"*** (Numbers 21:9).

Nearly twelve hundred years later, Jesus tried to explain to His followers what the meaning of Salvation was. He told Nicodemus that before a man can enter into the Kingdom of God, he first must be born again, but Nicodemus didn't understand how a grown man could be born again. After explaining, that it is our spirit that must undergo change, Jesus then reminded those who listened, of the time when God used Moses to provide

a remedy for those with a sentence of death on their life. He said, ***"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"*** (John 3:14-16).

Now, neither you nor I can walk or drive to a place where we can "see" Christ up on a pole, in order to receive Salvation as the Israelites did following being snake bit. We don't need to. However, if we "behold" Him who was lifted up as a sacrifice for our sin (which is the snake bite that brings death), and believe in Him as our "Healer," then we will live, eternally. Interestingly, the Father chose the image of a serpent, (which is the image of Satan) for Moses' symbol of forgiveness. Then Jesus picked up that symbol for Himself, not that He is a serpent, but that He became sin on our behalf, so

we wouldn't have to. We have the option to bypass the penalty of sin by receiving His action, which has the power to cancel sin, for ourselves. *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"* (II Corinthians 5:21).

In order for our spirit to be born again, something has to happen, something very special. You see, when the Israelites received a snake bite—**THEY KNEW THEY WOULD DIE.** They also believed that through Moses, God provided the way out, so as they approached the vantage point where they could see the serpent on a pole, they anticipated the commutation of their death sentence. For us likewise, we must first believe that we will die in our sin if something isn't done. When we know that, and believe that it was Jesus who was lifted up on a Cross so that when we realize our own snake bitten condition, we can come to Him through faith and believe. Jesus said that it is enough, that

we believe. When that special time occurs, we are changed eternally, Born Again, Saved through Salvation, and Redeemed by His Blood. Nothing else is required, according to these words of Jesus. For sure, we will change and we will do things out of obedience, love, and fear as well, but these things don't give us Salvation, only our belief in Him and the Cross He hung on will give us life instead of a poisonous snake bite leading to eternal death and separation from God. Behold Him today, for tomorrow may not come.

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