



LOOK & LIVE

You see it on ambulances and in hospitals around the world - the symbol of a serpent wrapped around a pole. Where did this unusual medical icon originate? The answer might surprise you!

The origin of that fascinating image of a serpent on a pole is found in the Bible. It took place during the time of Moses.

And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, 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 21:5-9

Fifteen hundred years later, a religious leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus one evening. This man was very respected but inwardly he was troubled. In the conversation that followed, Jesus told him how he could have eternal life (John 3:1-20). He made specific reference to the incident above, which helped open the eyes of Nicodemus to this wonderful truth. What was it about this serpent on a pole that was so enlightening? Let's take a closer look...

THE PROBLEM BEGAN WITH SIN

And the people spake against God... - Numbers 21:5

The plague of serpents began because the Israelites sinned against God. Most people have heard of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). Few people realize that the purpose of the law is not to make us good, but to show us that we are not. We've all broken God's law. We've all sinned against God.

... by the law is the knowledge of sin - Romans 3:20

... There is none righteous, no, not one: - Romans 3:10

... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. - Romans 3:23

SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES

***And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people,
...and much people of Israel died.*** - Numbers 21:6

God warned Adam & Eve that sin would cause death but they still disobeyed. Man has been sinning and dying ever since. Spiritual death separates man from God. It is the worst result of sin. If a man dies in this condition, he will be condemned to an eternity in hell. Sin truly has severe consequences.

For the wages of sin is death: ... - Romans 6:23

... by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men ... - Romans 5:12

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: - Ephesians 2:1

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, ... - Isaiah 59:2

THE PEOPLE REPENTED

*We have sinned, ... for we have spoken
against the Lord...* - Numbers 21:7

Suffering helped the Israelites realize the seriousness of their sin. They humbly sought forgiveness. This is called repentance. Do we realise the seriousness of our sin? We too must repent and seek forgiveness.

The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance - 2 Peter 3:9

For godly sorrow worketh repentance in salvation
- 2 Corinthians 7:10

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight:.. - Psalms 51:4

GOD PROVIDED A REMEDY

*Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole:
... every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it,
shall live* - Numbers 21:8

The situation was hopeless but God was merciful. He provided a remedy when He told Moses to put a brass serpent on a pole. This was symbolic of sin being judged. The way which God provided for us to be forgiven was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He shed His blood and died to pay for our sin. It is important to realize that Jesus is the sinless Son of God, but when He hung on a cross, He became *sin for us*.

*The serpent on the pole is a picture
of Jesus Christ on the cross!*

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; ... - 2 Corinthians 5:21

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, ... - 1 Peter 2:24

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. - Matthew 26:28

THERE WAS ONE REQUIREMENT

... any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. - Numbers 21:9

No one had to perform any religious rituals to be healed. No good deeds were required. They are only needed to LOOK. The same is true for you and me. If we accept full responsibility for our sin and truly want to be saved, we just need to put our FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast - Ephesians 2:8-9

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. - Romans 10:9

... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ... - Acts 16:31

Remember Nicodemus? He was saved and became a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. His life was changed. At the cross, we find him boldly helping to take down the body of Jesus (John 19:39-42). The words of Christ from that earlier conversation must have been echoing in his mind ...

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.

- John 3:14-15

Nicodemus helped lay the body in a tomb but in three days, Jesus rose again. Sin was judged but the sinless Saviour lives. The message of the serpent on a pole is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

LOOK & LIVE!

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. - Romans 10:13

God, I am a sinner. There is nothing in me that is worthy of your favour, but I know that Jesus Christ shed His blood to pay for my sin. I believe that He rose from the dead. I ask you, in the name of Lord Jesus Christ, to forgive me and save me. Amen.

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