

The Serpent On The Pole

Northwest Baptist Church

The Serpent Rules Mankind

- Aboriginal races, have from remote antiquity honored the serpent.
- All over Africa and China, India, the whole extent of America, the Isles of the Pacific, alike in sweltering tropics and ice-bound coasts, is the same tale told.

Man Worships The Serpent

- Civilized man-Egyptians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Arabians, Greeks, Romans- all have bowed to the serpent god.
- All religions, past and present, have recognized the serpent as a god.
- Primitive peoples and “civilized peoples” have all lifted up the serpent.

Pets In American Homes

- Dogs – 43 million
- Cats – 37 million
- Birds - 4 million
- Snakes – 400,000

Numbers 21:5-9

- Vs 5 – the people spoke against God and Moses
- Vs 6 – the Lord sent fiery serpents
- Vs 7 – the people confessed that they had sinned against God and asked God to save them.

God's Plan of Salvation

- Vs 8 – God provided a plan for salvation.
He set a brass serpent on a pole.
- Those who looked to the serpent on the pole by faith in God's plan, were saved.
- Every person had a free will to accept God's plan of salvation or to reject it.



Symbol of the Serpent on Pole

- The universal medical symbol for healing came from the Greek physician Asklepios who practiced in Greece around 1200 BCE – roughly the same time that Moses placed the bronze serpent on the staff that served as an agent of healing and redemption for the people.

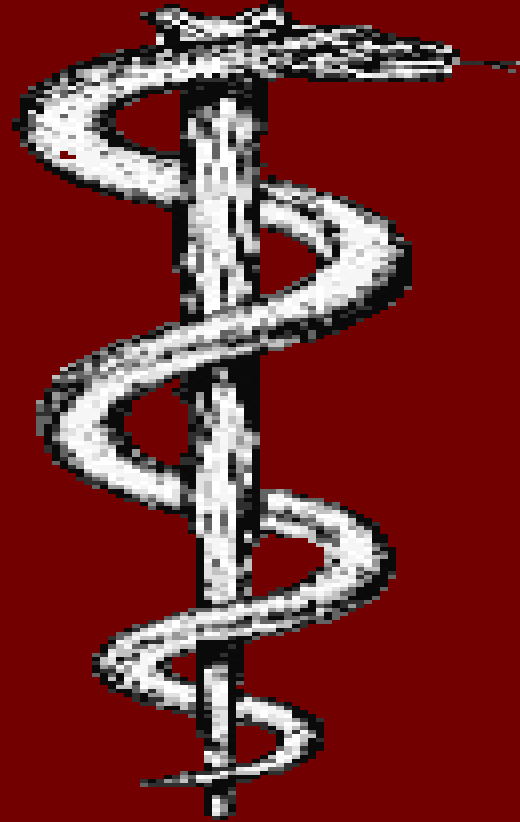
Medical Profession

- A sign for the medical profession is two serpents twisted around a pole.
- Caduceus -



Asclepius

- The rod of Asclepius is the dominant symbol for healthcare professionals and associations in the United States. One survey found that 62% of healthcare professionals used the rod of Asclepius, while 76% of commercial healthcare organizations used the caduceus.



Many Were Skeptical

- When they heard that a brazen serpent lifted up on a pole was to be the means of their cure, many of them were skeptical—absurd, ridiculous; who ever heard of such a thing? The plan is too simple.
- A serpent of brass lifted up upon a pole, to cure us of these wounds. The physicians cannot do it; will a glance at a brazen Serpent do it? It is not logical."

Doubters

- In Moses day, you either believed and followed God's plan, or you dis-believed and ignored God's plan for salvation.
- For many, it did not make sense.
- For many, it was too simple.

We Are All Snake-bit

- By one man (Adam) sin entered into this world. Romans 5:12
- By one man's disobedience (Adam's) sin was passed down through the generations to all men.
- In a sense we all carry the deadly venom of the serpent (the sin nature) and the wages of sin is death.

Psalm 58:3-4

- The wicked: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear.”

Followers of The Serpent Are Called Vipers

- Jesus said: "Ye are of your father the devil (the old serpent)"
- John the Baptist said: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come." John 8:44
- Those who do not have Christ as Father, have Satan as their father. They are children of the Old Serpent.

A Schoolmaster

To

Bring Us To Christ

- The writings of Moses were called the Law.
- Galatians 3:23-24
- “The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

The Serpent & Christ Lifted Up

- “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 everlasting life.”

John 3:14-15

The Serpent, The Burning One

- Satan is called the old Serpent. He was the serpent who tempted Adam and Eve.
- Following Satan is a sin.
- The wages of sin is death in the lake of fire. Sin brings a burning death.
- The word serpent means “the burning one”.
- When you were bit by the serpent, it meant a burning death.

Brass Pole

- Brass in the Bible is a symbol or type of judgment
- The altar for sacrifice of the Lambs for the sins of the people, was made of brass.
- Christ took our judgment (symbolized by brass)
- Christ bore on the pole all the sins of mankind that came from the Old Serpent for our sins.

Christ Lifted Up On A Pole

- Christ held our sins on his body on the “pole” that we being dead in our sins can be saved.
- God’s plan of salvation is to look to his son on the cross who is paying for the sins of the world, so that we do not have to die a fiery death.

Look and Live

- Romans 8:3 Please notice this, the brazen serpent had no venom of itself, but it took the form of a serpent. Christ is no sinner, and in Him is no sin. So, the brazen serpent was in the form of a serpent. And so, the Lord Jesus Christ was sent forth by God "in the likeness of sinful flesh."

Don't Look To Self

- Some who were so busy looking at their sores, that they did not think of looking at the serpent. Poor creatures, they lay in their misery, and kept looking first at that wound on the foot, and then at that one on the hand; and crying over their sores, and never looked at the serpent. Scores and hundreds perish in that way.

I've Sinned Too Much

- ' Oh," says the sinner, "I have been so sinful!" "I cannot look at Christ.
- You do not know what crimes I have committed; I have been a drunkard, a druggie, I have been a whore-monger, a liar, a thief; how can I be saved!"
- I have been snake bit too much.

Its Not The Number of Bites

- Whether you have one bite or fifty bites; all you have to do is to look. You have nothing to do with these bites, except that you have to feel them, and perish by them unless you look. But just look straight to Christ." Believe in the Lord Jesus; and be thy sins never so many, he is able to save unto the uttermost.

II Corinthians 5:21

- All of this, however, was only the symbol. The real deliverance required Christ to be made "sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."
- The Son of man must be lifted up on the cross, and then all who see Him, and believe, receive life instead of death.

Some Think They Are Not Sinners

- “I live a pretty good life.”
- “I am as good as the average church goer, or maybe better.”
- The Bible says: “none is righteous”, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”
- Jesus said: if you hate, you are a murderer; If you look at a woman with lust, you are an adulterer.

Most Take Sin Lightly

- In 1995 Illinois congressman Mel Reynolds was convicted of felony charges (sin) against a minor staff member.
- Rev. Jesse Jackson was roasted in the media for fathering a child with a young staff member(sin).
- He asked President Clinton who had a scandal with a young staff member, to give a presidential pardon to Reynolds.

Whatever Happened To Sin

- Chemically dependent
- Born in family of alcoholics
- Didn't have a good family
- Raised without a father
- Lived in a bad neighborhood
- Sin is a choice to follow the serpent rather than follow the one who, on the cross, bore the sins of the serpent.

Sin

- Two types of sin
- I John 3:4 Transgressing the laws of God
- John 4:17 Not doing what you know is God's will.

What Shall We Do?

- Those that listened to Christ, asked him this question: “What must we do to do the works of God?”
- All man-made religions are based upon doing good works – keeping the churches creed, following their rites, ceremonies and rituals, or keeping the commandments.

II Kings 18:1-4

- All through history, men have come up with substitutes for God's plan of salvation.
- II Kings 18:1-4 –
- Man changed God's plan from "Look and Live (faith) to burning incense and worshipping the snake on the pole", similar to how some treat the crucifix (works).

People Worshipped Snake/Pole

- Hezekiah destroyed Nehushtan, the false idol of a serpent on the cross that the people were worshipping.

To Many, The Cross An Idol

- The Cross today has become for the multitudes ... an idol. The crosses abound everywhere, in the churches, in the homes, in the dashboards of our cars, and even in the necklaces around the necks; and are worshipped, even as Israel worshipped [by burning incense to the brasen serpent].

Don't Worship The Cross

What was once meant to be a symbol for their salvation in the wilderness had become an idol. What is meant by the command to look and live in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross [True Salvation] has degenerated to a cross which is only a religious idol [False Salvation].

The Symbol Does Not Save

- In Jesus day, the Romans ruled Israel.
- The Roman army had a unique symbol.
- One of its standards was the serpent on a pole.
- They thought that the symbol would save in battle, just as many think the cross will save them from death.

Its Not The Snake

- **Snake handling** or **serpent handling** is a religious ritual in a small number of Pentecostal churches in the U.S., usually characterized as rural and Holiness. The practice began in the early 20th century in Appalachia, spreading to mostly coal mining towns.

Mark 16:17-18

- Practitioners quote the Book of Mark to support the practice:
- And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Just Look And Live

- The founder of modern snake handling in the Appalachian Mountains died from snakebite in 1955. In 1998, snake-handling evangelist John Wayne "Punkin" Brown died after being bitten by a timber rattler at the Rock House Holiness Church in rural northeastern Alabama. His wife died three years earlier after a snake bit her. Many others have been bit and died.

What Is The Serpent to You

- Many are religious and wear the symbol of the cross.
- Some handle the serpents to show they are religious.
- Many think serpents are fun and make them pets.
- Most are followers of the serpent and don't realize the fiery death it brings.

Faith In God's Salvation

- John 3:14-15
- If you look to Christ's death, burial and resurrection and by faith trust in this for your salvation, satan's venom will have no effect on you.
- Look to the cross and ye shall be saved from the fiery death.

Sin Started With The Tree

- Man's works – picking and eating the forbidden fruit from the tree, brought sin into this world.
- Man's faith – in God allowing his son to die upon the tree for our salvation, covers all of our sins.

Look unto Christ for Salvation

- Man through Adam and Eve became sinners by a look. "And when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food..."
Genesis 3:6.
- "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."
Isaiah 45:22.

Look And Live

- On Sunday, January 6, 1850, a snowstorm crippled the city of Colchester, England, so Charles Haddon Spurgeon was unable to attend his regular church. Instead, he made his way down the street to the primitive chapel where a layman filled in for the regular pastor. Young Spurgeon was under deep conviction about his sins and God's salvation.

Look and Be Saved

- The Bible text the layman chose for his sermon was Isaiah 45:22.
- "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." The layman pointed at young Charles Spurgeon and said, "Young man, you can look."

Look And Live

- Spurgeon looked to the Lord, was saved, received the gift of eternal life, and became one of the greatest preachers in history.

We've All Been Snake Bit

- Satan that old serpent has bit us all, but we do not have to suffer the eternal burning.
- Christ was lifted up on the pole for us.
- By faith in God's plan of salvation, we can look and live.