



# **Remove the Controversial Cross**

**truth about execution stake**

By Daniel Rendelman

In the next few weeks, the Supreme Court is expected to give a ruling regarding a Christian cross that sits atop a precipice in the Mojave desert. This cross has been the center of religious debate since a former government employee sued because it was permitted, but a Buddhist shrine was not allowed on the same land. The symbol of the cross, though beloved by millions, is indeed controversial for many reasons.

History shows that the cross was already a religious symbol hundreds of years before the Messiah walked the earth. It was often used as a sign of phallic worship by the Egyptians, Babylonians, Druids, and Greeks. Those who worshipped the god Tammuz would write or wear the mystic Tau, cross shape, in reference to the initial of their god's name. Interestingly, Tammuz was a god-man hybrid that was supposedly born of a virgin and whose shed blood brought new life. To worship Tammuz, a forty day period of fasting was held each year that would culminate with the retelling of the resurrection of Tammuz from the dead. These similarities between Tammuz and the Christ made the transition to using the cross as a symbol of Christianity an easy compromise for new believers. "In the Egyptian churches the cross was a pagan symbol of life borrowed by the Christians and interpreted in the pagan manner," The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, vol. 14, p.273,

To make matters worse, it is highly doubtful that the Messiah was crucified upon a cross. The most popular Roman method of crucifixion used during the times of the Savior was actually a straight stake or tree as prophesied

in Deuteronomy 21:23. Historical texts prove that the few times a cross beam was used by the Romans for an execution; the shape resembled the capitalized letter T and not the lower case t shape. In the New Testament, the word translated for “cross” is the Greek phrase “stauros.” According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, this term literally means “stake” or “upright beam.” The Messiah Himself made such a reference to crucifixion on an upright pole in John 12:32, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” The Old Testament shows in Numbers 21:8-9 that after a horrible plague, Moses took a brazen serpent on a pole and raised it as a symbol of healing. (This is where the modern medical symbol originates.)

Later in the Scriptures, the Hebrew people were guilty of offering incense to this same bronze serpent. They, like people with their crucifixes today, were looking to a symbol for miracles and healing. King Hezekiah destroyed the pole in 2nd Kings 18:1-6 and rebuked the people for exalting a symbol over the Almighty.

Through the centuries, the cross has become a major stumbling block. There are scores of unbelievers who remember that Christians stood in the shadow of the cross as Muslims and Jews were murdered during the Crusades. Even Hitler used his own version of the cross as he killed millions in the Holocaust. Today most people will deny that they worship their crosses, but these items certainly carry an emotional attachment. A little research will verify that the cross simply can not be justified as an acceptable symbol in the Bible or the history books. Perhaps in an effort to return to a historically and scripturally accurate representation of Christianity, the cross should be removed from the Mojave dessert and banished from the churches in America. What could it hurt?