

Moses Wrote of Me

Name: _____

Read the Scripture passages (emphasis was added). Then read the reflection and write a response to the question at the end.

Num 21:7-9

21 ⁷So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and *set it up* as a sign; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall *live*.” ⁹So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it up as a sign; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and *live*.

Jn 3:14-15

3 ¹⁴And as Moses *lifted up* the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be *lifted up*, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal *life*.

Reflection

Jesus told his disciples, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me” (Jn 5:46). Let’s look at an Old Testament passage and then see how Jesus fulfilled the writings of Moses.

The Old Testament passage above describes what happened after the Israelites were complaining against God and Moses (Num 21:5–6). They were tired of walking in the wilderness. They even said they would prefer to return to Egypt rather than keep going. God responded by sending serpents among them to bite them. When they repented, the Lord instructed Moses to build a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. If they were bitten by a serpent, they looked at the bronze serpent and were healed.

In the New Testament passage above, Jesus identified himself with the bronze serpent. Like the serpent, he was lifted up on the Cross. He is the source of healing to those who are wounded by sin. Jesus promises life to whomever believes in him. Just as the Israelites had to look at the bronze serpent, we have to look to Christ in faith. Belief in Christ consists in trusting that by his Cross, we are healed of the deadly wound caused by mortal sin.

God’s instructions to Moses solved the immediate problem facing the people at that time. However, the bronze serpent also prepared for God’s complete healing of his people in Christ. The bronze serpent restored natural life, but Jesus’ Death restored our supernatural life. This is one example of how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament. His work in the New Testament provides new meaning to the events of the Old Testament. God planned the events of the Old Testament with Christ’s future actions in mind.

Saint Jerome taught that “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (CCC 133, quoting Saint Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*). **How does knowing the story of the bronze serpent in the Book of Numbers help us know more about Jesus?**
