

(John 3:9-16, NIV84)

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven-the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Jesus had his nighttime conversation with Nicodemus early on in His ministry. Nevertheless, even at that early stage He was fully aware of the end goal of His earthly ministry: "The Son of Man must be lifted up." No, Jesus was not speaking of when His disciples would lift Him up to put Him on the back of a donkey on that Palm Sunday in His distant future. Nor was He speaking of when He would be lifted up from the earth to ascend back to His heavenly throne.

Jesus references an event recorded in the book of Numbers when, because the Israelites grumbled against the Lord, He sent venomous snakes into their camp and many were bitten and died. The people pleaded for God to take the snakes away, but instead the Lord commanded Moses: "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live" (Numbers 21:8).

You and I too have been "bitten by a venomous snake" called sin, and because of it we are subject to death. This is why Jesus says, "The Son of Man must be lifted up." Jesus had to be lifted up on a cross to pay the awful debt that you and I owed to God because of our sin. This is why Jesus rode into Jerusalem that Palm Sunday so long ago. He did it all for you and for me; such is our Savior's love. Everyone who looks to Jesus in faith will live. Today and always, look to Jesus!

Healed in Christ with you,
Pastor Golm

April 5

As One Who Had Been There

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. John 14:2

There is something remarkable about every reference of the Christ to his Father's house. He spoke as one who had been there! No one can read the account of his midnight interview with

Nicodemus without being impressed with the authority with which our Lord of the things of heaven. "We speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen", he says.

No one could have witnessed that tender scene in the Upper Room when the Savior spoke fondly of his Father's house to his disciples without sensing our Lord's intimate and accurate knowledge of the house of which he spoke.

Notice the assurance of his words: "If it were not so, I would have told you."

As one who stands on a mountain-top-looking down into the valley beyond and telling his comrades behind him what he sees- our Savior tells us about his Father's house and ours. The streets of the eternal city are familiar to him, the mansions of the Father's house stand clear and bright before his all-seeing eye. He knows what lies beyond the valley, for he has come from there. That is why he can say with calm assurance: "If it were not so, I would have told you."

What a comfort to have as our dearest Friend him who has already spent endless ages in the eternal Father's house, who knows the way, and who by his holy suffering and death for our sins upon the cross has opened that way for us. Into the hands of such an omniscient, heavenly Savior we can place our souls with utmost confidence. He will bring us to his Father's house.

O sweet and blessed country, The home of God's elect!

O sweet and blessed country That eager hearts expect!

Jesus, in mercy bring us To that dear land of rest, Who art, with God the Father And Spirit, ever blest.

With that prayer within our heart, we can open each new day and go to bed each night, trusting in our Savior's promise.