

what r u up 2? “Lifted UP”

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden
for First UMC, Grand Junction, Sunday, March 17, 2024

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ website or by clicking this link and finding the date of the worship service in which it appears:

<https://www.christianworldmedia.com/wordstream/fumcgj/search>

*Scripture Text: John 12:20-23, 27-33 [NRSV]
with reference to Numbers 21:4-9*

OPENING

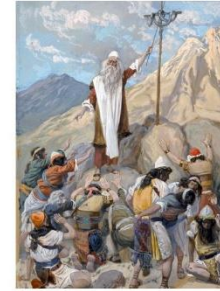
- ✓ A few words on the beginning of Lent: Ash Weds converging with Valentine’s Day
- ✓ And the invitation of this service to reflect on the lengths to which God would go to demonstrate the
- ✓ Scripture passage we focused on last week: *For God so loved the world...*

TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Scripture passage for today is a little puzzling to me: We see in John 12:20 that there were some Greeks who wished to see Jesus... Then in v. 23, Jesus says the time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Why that response to the simple request from a few Greeks to see him at the festival?

This statement makes sense a few verses later when Jesus makes a cryptic reference to a very important tradition that shows up in the book of Numbers.

(*Paraphrase the story from Num. 21:4-9.*)



Moses’ Bronze Serpent on a Pole



Jesus Lifted UP, as the Object of Healing for the World



Bronze Sculpture at the Shrine to Moses – Mt. Nebo



Moses' View of the Promised Land from Mt. Nebo

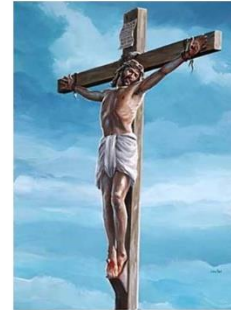
SERMON THOUGHTS

Now, the significance of Jesus' puzzling statement to Philip, Andrew, and the other listeners:

The Greeks coming to Jerusalem for the Passover festival and asking to see Jesus pointed, for Him, to the beginning of the final drama when He, indeed, would be lifted up from the earth to save *all people* from the fate of sin: separation from God.

CONCLUSION

Lead into the hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" as an opportunity to reflect on this.



When I survey the wondrous cross...

For **Karen** and **Yancey**: Sing vv. 1 & 2 of the hymn, then blank screen and **Karen** play through once for reflection / meditation, then, **Yancey**, words for v. 4 and all sing to the end.