

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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SALVATION

OF
ZACCHEUS

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Living Stream Ministry
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A LEADING SINNER

In Luke 19:1-10 we have the record of the Lord's saving Zaccheus in Jericho. Verse 1 says, "And He entered and was passing through Jericho." Jericho is a city of curse (Josh. 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34).

Luke 19:2 says, "And behold, there was a man whose name was called Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax collector, and he was rich." Tax collectors were those who collected the taxes levied by the Romans. Nearly all of them abused their office by demanding more than they should by false accusation (Luke 3:12-13; 19:8). To pay taxes to the Romans was very bitter to the Jews. Those engaged in collecting them were despised by the people and counted unworthy of any respect (Luke 18:9-11). Often they defrauded the people. Hence, they were classed with sinners (Matt. 9:10-11). As a chief tax collector, Zaccheus was a chief sinner, a leading sinner. He became rich through his sinfulness as a tax collector.

In his confession to the Lord related to restitution and clearing of the past, Zaccheus said to

Him, “Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore four times as much” (v. 8). The Greek word for “taken anything” in [verse 8](#) is the same as that used in [Luke 3:14](#). It is a mild way of speaking of extortion. Tax collectors put a higher value on property or increased the tax of those unable to pay and then charged high interest. This was the way they extorted others. As Zaccheus was seeking to make restitution, he referred to his extortion. What Zaccheus did in restoring four times the amount he extorted was very honest. Nevertheless, he still referred to his acts of extortion in a euphemistic way. A man who had become rich by being sinful, Zaccheus now wanted to make full restitution in order to clear up his sinful past.

SEEKING TO SEE JESUS

[Luke 19:3 and 4](#) say, “And he was seeking to see Jesus, who He is; and he could not because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. And he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree that he might see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.” Although Zaccheus climbed up in the tree to see the Lord Jesus, we are told not that he saw the Lord but that the Lord saw

him: “And as He came to the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down; for today I must stay in your house” (v. 5). The seeing was not on Zaccheus’s side; it was on the Savior’s side. Once again we see the Man-Savior’s high standard of morality in saving sinners. Nothing was done by the sinner; rather, everything was done by the Savior, even the seeing. In [verse 6](#) we are told that Zaccheus “hurried and came down, and welcomed Him, rejoicing.”

THE MAN-SAVIOR STAYING IN ZACCHEUS’S HOUSE

Zaccheus certainly was an isolated person. He was despised to the uttermost by the Jewish community and was even more isolated than a leper. Especially the Pharisees, the high ranking hypocrites in the Jewish religion, did not care for him. In their sight he was more unclean than someone with leprosy. Nevertheless, in front of a large crowd the Savior told Zaccheus, “Today I must stay in your house.” What a great surprise that was to Zaccheus and to everyone in the crowd! The entire city of Jericho must have been shaken by it. [Verse 7](#) says, “And seeing it, they all grumbled, saying, He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man.”

THE SPONTANEOUS ISSUE OF THE DYNAMIC POWER OF THE LORD' S SALVATION

In verses 1 through 7 we are not told that the Lord said much to Zaccheus. Zaccheus, however, responded in a very strong way, recognizing the Savior as his Lord. “And Zaccheus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor” (v. 8). Zaccheus could utter such a word even though he had not heard the Man-Savior’s teaching concerning material possessions.

On the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, the Savior spoke about material possessions a number of times. The first was in chapter twelve. When someone out of the crowd asked Him to tell his brother to divide the inheritance, He said to them, “Take heed and guard yourself from all covetousness; for no one’s life is in the abundance of his possessions” (12:15). Then in 14:33 the Savior went on to say, “Everyone of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be My disciple.” In chapter sixteen He spoke to His disciples concerning the mammon of unrighteousness and then issued a warning to the rich. In chapter seventeen He spoke about

material possessions in relation to the rapture of the overcomers: “In that day, he who shall be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind” ([v. 31](#)). Following this, in [18:22](#) He said to the rich ruler, “All things, whatever you have, sell and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come, follow Me.” From all these instances we see that the Man-Savior spoke repeatedly concerning material possessions. Zaccheus, of course, did not hear any of this. Nevertheless, in responding to the Savior’s word, he said that half of his possessions he gives to the poor.

We have seen that in [verse 8](#) Zaccheus went on to say to the Lord, “If I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore four times as much.” What Zaccheus did here was according to the requirements of the law for restoration ([Exo. 22:1](#); [2 Sam. 12:6](#)). This was the spontaneous issue of the dynamic power of the Lord’s salvation.

In the case of the saving of Zaccheus in Jericho, we see that the Lord’s salvation is actually the Lord Himself. In [verse 5](#) He says, “Today I must stay in your house.” But in [verse 9](#) He says

to Zaccheus, “Today salvation has come to this house.” When we put these verses together, we see that “I” in [verse 5](#) is equal to “salvation” in [verse 9](#). This indicates that salvation is actually the Lord Himself. When He comes, salvation comes. Wherever He stays, there salvation stays.

A CAPTIVE UNDER OPPRESSION

We have pointed out that Zaccheus responded to the Man-Savior in the way he did because of the dynamic power of His salvation. With the Man-Savior there is dynamic power, and this power is the Holy Spirit. He ministered the jubilee by the Holy Spirit. In [chapter four](#) He declared that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him because He had been anointed to proclaim release to the captives. The Lord had been appointed and anointed to proclaim the jubilee to all those who were oppressed.

In the sight of the religious people, especially the Pharisees, Zaccheus was a leading sinner, for he was a chief tax collector. But in the sight of the Man-Savior he was a captive under oppression. Before he climbed up the tree to see the Savior, Zaccheus may have given much consideration to how to be released from his sinful condition. As a Jew, he must have been condemned in his

conscience for working as a tax collector to gather taxes for the Roman imperialists. Hence, he was condemned by his own conscience as a traitor to his country. Therefore, he may have tried to get out of his sinful condition, but he was unable to do so, for he was a captive and was oppressed.

SEEKING AND SAVING THE LOST

Luke 19:10 says, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.” Here we see that Zaccheus was not only a sinner; he was also lost. The Savior came to Jericho purposely to seek and to save such a lost one.

The Lord’s seeking Zaccheus in Luke 19 may be compared to His seeking the Samaritan woman in John 4. The Savior told Zaccheus, “I must stay in your house,” and John 4:4 says of Him, “He had to pass through Samaria.” It was necessary for Him to go through Samaria in order to meet a lost Samaritan woman. The Lord went there to seek her and save her. The same kind of thing happened in Luke 19. The Lord had to stay in Zaccheus’s house in order to save this lost person.

SALVATION, THE JUBILEE, AND THE KINGDOM

In 19:1-10 we see that wherever the Man-Savior

is, there salvation is also, for He Himself is salvation. Furthermore, when this salvation is present, the kingdom of God is also present, and the kingdom of God is the jubilee. Therefore, when the Lord came into the house of Zaccheus, that was a jubilee not only for an individual but for the entire household. When the Lord came into his house, salvation came to that house.

The Savior is salvation, and salvation is the kingdom of God as the jubilee. Now we can realize that in [19:1-10](#) a leading sinner is brought into the jubilee of grace. Now he can enjoy the Savior and the kingdom of God, for now he is in the kingdom of God and enjoying this kingdom as his jubilee.

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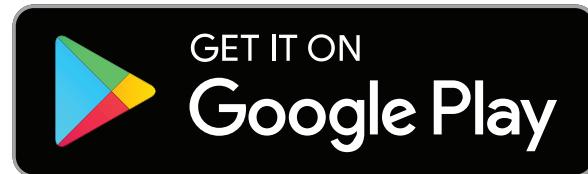
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