

eled highway between Perea and Jerusalem, and the residence of many influential Jews, the excitement here about Jesus was greater than in any other city except Jerusalem. **Could not for the crowd.** Not much consideration would be given to a publican by the kind of people in a street throng in Jericho.

4. Sycamore. The Greek means a fig mulberry. Its fruit was a species of figs, and its leaves were like the mulberry. Its short trunk and low branches made it easy to climb, and its full foliage of large leaves afforded a seclusion for the eager observer.

5. Jesus . . . saw him. Some writers think that Jesus knew him by supernatural wisdom.—*Olshausen*. Others think there was a previous acquaintance.—*Meyer*. Others that some one in the crowd pointed to Zaccheus, or mentioned him to Jesus.—*Paulus*. He was probably noticed by Jesus and others in a perfectly natural manner.—*Van Oosterzee*. As Jesus knew Nathanael under the fig tree, so he knew Zaccheus in the sycamore tree. And like Nathanael, Zaccheus recognized him as his Lord. And as Jesus pronounced Nathanael "an Israelite indeed," so here he pronounced Zaccheus "a son of Abraham."—*Whedon*. **Make haste.** A very hearty salutation. Possibly the crowd began to make sport of the publican in his peculiar position. The fact that one was disliked by the multitude aroused the spirit of chivalry in Christ (John 8, 3-11). **To-day I must abide.** Probably the remainder of the day and over night. "There is no time to lose. I shall never come this way again." It also implies the joy of the Saviour in finding a soul eager to find him. No hospitality of prince or priest could compare with that of a sinner ready to receive salvation.

6. And he made haste. The same zeal which made Zaccheus run ahead and mount a tree for a look at Jesus would make him quick and joyful to receive him into his own house. Each incident shows the increasing love of both host and guest for each other.

7. They all murmured. The criticism and opposition of the crowd were doubtless incited and maintained by the priests. Caste prejudice is one of the greatest barriers to religious progress, and the chief reason is that the officers of religion are peculiarly tempted to yield to it. The antecedent life of any inquirer ought not to exclude him from the counsels of the ministry and the church.

8. Zaccheus stood. A very brief summary of the conversation is given. As Jesus saw the one thing lacking in the young ruler, and gave him the right directions for the completing of his character (Mark 10, 21), so in this case of the publican he set before him the duty of making restitution of every ill-gotten gain. Unlike the ruler, the publican joyfully accepts the Master's order. In the

heartiness of his declaration he rises and stands while he makes it. **The half of my goods I give to the poor.** A purpose, not a past habit.—*Farrar*. Fifty per cent to benevolence is "hilarious" giving. And he a publican! **If I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man.** Excellent authorities (*Meyer*, *Olshausen*, *Alford*, *Whedon*) construe this statement as an expression of guilt and a determination to pursue a radically righteous course in the future. The Greek verb *eukophantasa*, literally, "fig shower," from which we get our word "sycophant," originated in the work of detecting the smuggling of figs. The detectives by lying charges against innocent persons soon became worse than the smugglers, and the word came to mean "accusing falsely." It occurs in John the Baptist's advice to the soldiers (Luke 3, 14).

9. To-day is salvation come to this house. The opportunity of salvation comes to every house Jesus enters, but the reality of salvation comes only with such faith and obedience as Zaccheus possessed. **He is a son of Abraham.** A great rebuke to the murmuring crowd, containing, doubtless, many Pharisees. He was a son of Abraham in his nationality, but much more in his spirit of faith and purpose of righteousness. If Zaccheus kept his vows, as tradition claims he did, he now rejoices as a son of God.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. Why did Jesus give Zaccheus this special call?

Because Zaccheus had special need for it and was ripe for it. He needed a special call because the contempt of his neighbors shut him out from ordinary helps toward goodness and God. His best possibilities could be called out only by his perceiving that some one still expected good of him. Jesus probably learned Zaccheus's character from some one in the crowd, and may have inferred his ripeness for the invitation from the tree climbing eagerness and the expression of face and eyes. Every true teacher understands such signs.

Question 2. Was Zaccheus's declaration a statement of a purpose for the future, or a rule in the past?

A careful and impartial reading of the narrative must, I think, lead us to the conclusion that this is the statement of a purpose to be pursued in the future. 1. Because Christ states that it was only that day that salvation had come to his house. 2. Because for him to say, "During all my past life I have been in the habit of giving half of my goods to feed the poor," would to me appear meaningless if not impossible. How could any man be continually giving half his goods to feed the poor?