

**JESUS CAME FOR ZACCHAEUS**

Luke 19:1-10

**Intro:** The passage I have chosen for today's message is the fourth and last of a brief series on reasons given in Scripture for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. Of course there are more than four reasons, but I am dealing with different ones in the hope that you will not only understand these, but will be encouraged to notice others in your own reading of your Bible. There is an interrelationship between them all because they all have to do with one coming of our Savior, His first coming, and in that first coming He accomplished all that He came to do.

For those of you who have not been with us in this series, let me review in just a few words the three reasons that we have already covered.

We learned from John 1:18 that the Lord Jesus came to reveal God the Father. In reading the Bible beginning with the book of Genesis we have a gradual and progressive revelation of God. But that revelation was not completed until the Lord Jesus Christ came. He alone of all who preceded Him could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," as He told Philip according to John 14:7. In John 1:18, which was my text for that message, we read, "And the Word was made [became what He had not been before, in contrast with the statement in John 1:1 that He "was God"] flesh ..." So in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the completed revelation of God. And as we read our Bibles we need to be noticing how God revealed Himself at different times and in different ways to different people. For example, the most important part about the story of Abraham in the book of Genesis, is not what it tells us about Abraham, but what Abraham learned about God. And is true of what we are told about all of the people who are mentioned in Scripture. The same applies to us. What is important about us, eternally important, is not what we have done for God, but what He has done in our lives, and what we have learned about Him.

In my second message we learned from John 6:38-40 that the Lord Jesus came to earth on a mission from the Father, to do the Father's will. The Father's will had to do with those who have been chosen by God, and whom God gave to His Son. Specifically this had to do with salvation. The Lord would love none of them, but twice our Lord said that it was the Father's will that His elect would all be raised "at the last day." This ties in with John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth to Me shall come unto Me;

and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Therefore, everyone who believes in Christ, really trusting Christ, will be saved forever – with no exceptions!

Last Sunday my text was John 18:37, words spoken by our Lord to Pilate when our Lord was on trial before the Roman governor. And He told Pilate, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” In our Lord’s day, truth and error were so mixed together that most people did not know what was truth and what was error. And most people did not care. Pilate responded to the Lord in what must have been express in a scornful tone, “What is truth?” He had absolutely no interest in pursuing a conversation with the Lord about the truth. I contrasted Pilate with Nicodemus who was deeply concerned about the truth. After the Lord made the statement about the truth, He added, “Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.” It is quite evident that Pilate was not “of the truth,” but Nicodemus was. This is the great difference between the elect, and those who are not elect – the elect want to know the truth; the non-elect do not.

My text for today is mainly Luke 19:10. Listen as I read it to you again. Again, these are the Lord’s own words: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” This is a clear statement of His mission in the world: He had come “to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Note what our Lord called Himself: “the Son of man.” This title was first used in the prophecy of Ezekiel. It is what God called Ezekiel. It appears over sixty times in Ezekiel. It appears only one other time in all of the OT, and that is in Dan. 7:13 where it is definitely a reference to Christ. It is found many times in each of the four Gospels, and it is always a title that our Lord used for Himself. Beyond the book of Acts it is only found three times: once in Acts 7:56 where it is recorded that Stephen saw “the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”; and twice in the book of the Revelation (1:13; 14:14). Both of those are references to the Lord. It is never recorded that anyone called the Lord, “the Son of man,” in addressing Him. Mark used this title twice when speaking about what the Lord taught, or what the Lord would eventually do at His return. But it was evidently too sacred a term for even His disciples to address Him as the Son of man.

We would have to say from the way the Lord used it in speaking to

Ezekiel, that it is a prophetic title. From our Lord's use of it, it spoke of His Messianic position. Dr. Feinberg pointed out in his commentary on Ezekiel this distinction between Ezekiel and our Lord:

When used of man it points out the prophet's position as a frail creature in the sight of the majestic Creator. It is not meant so much to distinguish man from the angels and living creatures as to differentiate man from God Himself. As a phrase used to designate man it is very common in the Aramaic language. Since the prophet is identified with man, he can be expected, as no angel could, to manifest human understanding and sympathy.

And then Dr. Feinberg added this about the Lord:

A most significant use of the phrase "Son of man" was that made by our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone referred to Himself under this designation, but He did so scores of times in the Gospels. When He used this expression he was pointing out His link with the lost world (Luke 19:10). So, similarly, the reference underscored the reality of Christ's manhood just as "Son of God" emphasized His Deity. Christ, as the representative Man, is seen both in His lowliness and in His exaltation in His first and second comings (note Psa. 8:4-8; 144:3; Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 16:13; 19:28; 25:31; 26:64; John 5:27; Heb. 2:5-18) (pp. 22, 23).

We can surely call our text in Luke 19:10 a key verse in explaining the meaning of the title "Son of man." It was very important that He become a man in order to die for men. But as we saw in John 1:14, the Lord in becoming Man did not cease to be God in anyway. And so in our Lord we have not only Deity and humanity, but *perfect humanity!* In the story of Zacchaeus our Lord sought Zacchaeus to save him. He sought Zacchaeus because Zacchaeus would never have of His own accord sought the Lord. And He saved Zacchaeus because Zacchaeus could not have saved himself, nor could anyone else have saved him.

But what happened to Zacchaeus that day, has happened to every person who has ever been saved, or who will ever be saved. You and I did not realize this when we were saved, but since they we have become acquainted with our Lord's words in John 6:44, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

The story of Zacchaeus is a story of sovereign grace!

Now let us look at Luke's account of the Lord seeking and saving Zacchaeus. And remember: *This is not a parable; this is an actual event which took place when our Lord was here on earth!*

First of all, let us get acquainted with Zacchaeus. Who was he?

### **I. ZACCHAEUS (Luke 19:1-4).**

He lived in Jericho, a city which God had cursed and which never should have been rebuilt.

He was a Jew, but the Jews despised him because he was a publican. And they had a special hatred for Zacchaeus because he "was the chief among the publicans." This probably meant that he was the head man of the Roman IRS. The Jews looked upon all publicans as men who were collaborators with the Romans and against the Jews. They were tax collectors. They had a certain amount to collect from the Jews, but they could also charge more than the Romans asked them to get and keep most of it for themselves.

So we read that "he was rich." And he had gotten rich at the expense of his fellow Jews. That is why publicans were hated.

But there was something going on in this Jew's heart. God had seen to it that Zacchaeus' money did not satisfy him the way he thought that it would. I said a moment ago that no man would seek Christ on his own. The Bible says that: "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11, quoting Psa. 14 and Psa. 53). Whenever you see a person really seeking God, you can be sure that God is working in his heart.

But to further complicate the picture in the preceding chapter of Luke's Gospel we have the statement of the Lord about how difficult it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. See Luke 18:24-25. Zacchaeus was probably the richest man in Jericho. He desperately wanted to see the Lord, but he was small and the crowd was great, so the only way he could possibly see the Lord was to run ahead (because he knew which way the Lord would go), climb up in a tree where he could get a good look at the Lord. And this is what he did.

Now let's talk about the Lord.

## **II. JESUS (Luke 19:5-6).**

When the Lord got to where Zacchaeus was, “He looked up, and saw him,” and called him by his name: “Zacchaeus.” That must have been a tremendous shock to Zacchaeus. The Lord told him to come down out of the tree with haste because the Lord wanted to go home with him. And notice that the Lord used the word “must.” Do you remember that we had that word in connection with Samaria in John 4:4? It speaks of what the Father had appointed the Lord Jesus to do. Zacchaeus was on the Lord’s list.

How did Zacchaeus respond? Did he have the same attitude that Pilate would show later? Absolutely not! Zacchaeus “made haste, and came down, and received” the Lord “joyfully.”

How did the crowd respond?

## **III. THE CROWD (Luke 19:7).**

The people murmured in amazement. The Lord lost ground with them because he was going home with “a sinner.” That was the term that Jews used for Gentiles, and for people of low moral standards. To the people Zacchaeus was in the same category as a prostitute. And they were critical of the Lord for what He was doing.

At this point a curtain is drawn over what happened while the Lord and Zacchaeus were together in Zacchaeus’ home. One thing we can be sure of is that they talked about the Gospel because that very day an amazing change took place in the life of Zacchaeus. Notice what he told the Lord.

## **IV. A NEW ZACCHAEUS AND THE LORD (Luke 19:8-9).**

On that day and during that visit Zacchaeus had been born from above. He had become a new creature in Christ. He had been forgiven of his sins. And many in that crowd who had been critical of what the Lord did were going to benefit financially because the Lord went home with Zacchaeus.

Look at what Zacchaeus said he was going to do! Read verse 8.

Then look at the way the Lord explained what had happened. Read verse

9. When the Lord said that Zacchaeus was “a son of Abraham,” He was not just saying that Zacchaeus was a Jew, a natural descendant of Abraham. He was saying that spiritually he was a descendant of the promise that the Lord had made to Abraham. He was heir of the promise of salvation. What the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians churches, applied also to Zacchaeus. I am referring to Gal. 3:29, “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Not everybody knows when they were saved, but we know the day that Zacchaeus was saved because the Lord said, “This day is salvation come to this house.” How did Zacchaeus become “a son of Abraham”? He became “a son of Abraham” by divine election, “chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4).

But let me mention one more word in closing. And you find this in our main text: Luke 19:10. The word “lost.” This statement is found also in Matt. 18:11.

The Greek verb which is translated “lost” here is the same verb that is translated “perish” in John 3:16. Zacchaeus, like every person without Christ was under the sentence of death, eternal death. Many people with lots of money are content to live without God and without Christ. But there are also people without money who have learned that they have needs, spiritual needs, which money cannot buy. Zacchaeus was such a man. But it was God Who had chosen him. And it was God who sent His Son to seek and to save Zacchaeus from eternal death, from an eternal hell. Zacchaeus was one reason that the Lord Jesus went to the Cross.

**Concl:** Remember the words of that wonderful Gospel song,  
O the love that sought me,  
O the blood that bought me,  
O that grace that brought me to the fold,  
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold.

Salvation means two things. It means deliverance from the penalty of our sin with total forgiveness, and it means the transformation of our lives. And you don't have the second unless you have the first. And it is the Lord Who does both of these great works. Perhaps the Lord is calling someone here today. If He is, you will surely come to Him, trusting Him as your Savior and as your Lord.