

International Bible Lessons Commentary
Luke 19:1-10

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, May 29, 2016

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 29, 2016**, is from **Luke 19:1-10**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the **International Bible Lesson Forum**.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Luke 19:1-10

(Luke 19:1) He entered Jericho and was passing through it.

Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, and the LORD brought down the city's walls after the army marched around it seven times; then Joshua put a curse on the city: "At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: 'Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates.'" (Joshua 6:26). During the reign of King Ahab, Jericho was rebuilt, and the curse fell upon the builder's sons: "In Ahab's time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken by Joshua son of Nun" (1 Kings 16:34). Jericho is located north of the Dead Sea near the Jordan River, east of Jerusalem. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan who helped a man who was robbed as he traveled from Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke 10:30-36). Jesus was on his way for His final visit to Jerusalem before His crucifixion.

(Luke 19:2) A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich.

The name Zacchaeus means "pure." He was an Israelite who worked with the Roman conquerors and oppressors of Judea by collecting taxes for them. Other tax collectors worked under him to collect taxes for Rome. Tax collectors were despised by the people, perhaps because they had the

reputation of cheating people for excessive personal profit. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus had become very rich.

(Luke 19:3) He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, perhaps because he had heard about and talked to the blind man, Bartimaeus, whom Jesus had healed in Jericho (Mark 10:46-52). Jesus had been in ministry for three years, so many would have reported in Jericho what they had seen and heard about Jesus. Zacchaeus was short and because he was a tax collector probably no one would let him squeeze between them in order to see Jesus.

(Luke 19:4) So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.

Just as Jesus had said we must become like little children to enter the kingdom of God, so Zacchaeus ran ahead of the waiting crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus (see Luke 18:17). Apparently the crowd knew the way Jesus would enter the city as He traveled through the city to Jerusalem, and without waiting for Jesus to come further into the city, Zacchaeus ran to the front of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree (perhaps to avoid the possibility of others pushing in front of him and blocking his view).

(Luke 19:5) When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.”

Probably led by the Holy Spirit (who knew Zacchaeus’ heart), he put himself where Jesus could easily see and find him, and also where the crowd could hear any conversation between Jesus and Zacchaeus. Jesus knew what Zacchaeus needed and wanted, for Jesus knew what was in each person: “But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person” (John 2:24-25). So, Jesus invited himself into Zacchaeus’ home “immediately” without waiting to address the crowd.

(Luke 19:6) So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.

Zacchaeus did immediately what Jesus asked of him. Zacchaeus also welcomed Jesus gladly. Zacchaeus was a sinner, but he had probably heard how Jesus welcomed tax collectors and sinners. John the Baptist had baptized repentant sinners in the Jordan River near Jericho, and Zacchaeus may have been one of those tax collectors who went to John as Jesus said: “For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him” (Matthew 21:32). Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus gladly because he had prepared himself for a day when he might

meet Jesus. He showed that he was a repentant sinner by welcoming Jesus gladly.

(Luke 19:7) All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.”

Whenever Jesus spent time with tax collectors and sinners, those who thought they were righteous and looked down upon such people criticized Jesus. But even one of Jesus’ disciples had once been a tax collector. So notorious were tax collectors that when Matthew lists himself among Jesus’ disciples he identifies himself as the tax collector (see Matthew 9:9 and Matthew 10:3). Jesus could have said to some of those who criticized him: “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you” (Matthew 21:31).

(Luke 19:8) Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.”

Zacchaeus proved that he was heart-prepared to meet Jesus, and that is why he welcomed him gladly and stood up and declared to Jesus what he was going to do with his wealth. Zacchaeus was not required to give all of his possessions to the poor, but he was led to give substantially to help the poor. He may not have cheated anyone, but he was willing to obey the law of Moses, make restitution, and repay anyone four times the amount he

had stolen (see Exodus 22:1). Zacchaeus showed true repentance and faith.

(Luke 19:9) Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.

Jesus had told His disciples that it was difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, but what is impossible with man is possible with God (see Luke 18:24-27). The fact that Zacchaeus repented and came to faith in Jesus proved that God had made it possible for him to enter the kingdom of God. Salvation came to his house because Jesus had come into his house, and Christ through Zacchaeus would lead each member of his household to saving faith. Peter wrote, “You are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” And Peter preached, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). In the Book of Revelation, we read, “And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (Revelation 7:10). Zacchaeus was more than an Israelite, the Apostle Paul explained the meaning of a “son of Abraham”: “Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham” and “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:7; Galatians 3:29). Jesus said, “If you were Abraham's children, then you would do what Abraham did” (John 8:39).

(Luke 19:10) For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

Jesus sought and saved Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus did not save himself. Jesus described how He came to seek and save the lost in the parable of the lost sheep and in the parable of the lost coin (see Luke 15:1-10). In another parable, Jesus also described the faith response of a lost son when he “came to his senses” and returned to his father who received him with love and forgiveness (Luke 15:11-32). Zacchaeus demonstrated his faith response to the grace of God when he climbed the tree to see Jesus. After Jesus found him there and went to his home, in faith Zacchaeus declared how his life would be different. Jesus declared that salvation had come to his home, because Jesus Christ himself is salvation and He came to Zacchaeus house “to seek and save the lost.”

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Compare Jesus’ approach to tax collectors and sinners to the Pharisees’ approach.
2. If he had heard John the Baptist preach, how might Zacchaeus have prepared himself to meet Jesus?
3. What clues in this event might indicate that Zacchaeus had probably prepared himself to meet Jesus?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said salvation had come to Zacchaeus house?
5. Who is a child of Abraham?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
International Bible Lesson.

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