

A Heart Prepared to Meet Jesus
International Bible Lesson
Luke 19:1-10
Sunday, May 29, 2016
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“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount’” (Luke 19:8).

Zacchaeus was a tax collector for the Romans in Jericho near the Jordan River, so he may have heard John the Baptist preach. Zacchaeus may have been baptized when John proclaimed “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:3). Luke recorded, “Even tax collectors came to be baptized. ‘Teacher,’ they asked, ‘what should we do?’ ‘Don’t collect any more than you are required to,’ John told them” (Luke 3:12-13). By previously submitting to John’s baptism, Zacchaeus may have prepared his heart to meet Jesus, because Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus gladly and told Jesus and the crowd that if he had cheated anybody he would make restitution to them. Zacchaeus rightly applied to his situation the Law of God in Exodus 22:1, “Whoever steals ... a sheep ... must pay back ... four sheep for the sheep.” He may not have cheated anyone, but if he had, he was willing to pay them four times the amount. His willingness to make restitution was a sign he had repented. Zacchaeus also promised to give half of his possessions to the poor, another sign he had faith in Jesus and Jesus had cleansed his heart. Jesus proclaimed to the crowd, “Today, salvation has come to this house” (Luke 19:9). Jesus also told everyone about Zacchaeus’ changed life and faith when Jesus declared that Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham. From the Apostle Paul, we learn what Jesus meant: “Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7).

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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?