

ZACCHEUS AND THE FIG..SYCAMORE TREE

(Luke 19:1-10, 13:6-9, **Matt 24:32**)

The following is a very brief explanation of the story of the fig tree (sycamore), and Zaccheus the tax collector. The eight to ten inch huge leaves of the sycamore tree, sometimes called sycamore figs, were heart shaped. Keep in mind the fig tree and the wood of it in prophesy represents the nations of the world other than Israel. Remember Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves, because they were so large. In Hebrew, when a fig leaf is used symbolically, it is in reference to something being covered up, it is considered as an excuse. By covering themselves with fig leaves, they were covering themselves with excuses.

What was considered the poor man's offering was wood from the fig tree.

In prophesy, Israel is always represented as the olive tree. They never put olive wood on the altar. The olive tree represents Israel. In the Temple, what was considered the poor man's offering was wood from the fig tree.



Luke 19:1-10 *And He entered and was passing through Jericho. 2 And behold, there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax-gatherer, and he was rich. 3 And he was trying to see who Yeshua was, and he was unable because of the crowd, for **he was small in stature**. 4 And he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. 5*

*And when Yeshua came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 And he hurried and came down, and received Him gladly. 7 And when they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 And Zaccheus stopped and said to Adonai, "Behold, Adonai, **half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.**" 9 And Yeshua said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

Tax collector

In biblical times tax collectors were Jewish men who could walk up to a man and tax him for what he was carrying or selling. These tax collectors were hated and despised because they were usually fellow Jews who worked for Rome. The taxes these men collected were needed from the provinces to administrate the Roman Empire. These taxes helped pay for the roads, law and order, security, etc. etc. A tax collector in this period of time wasn't considered a Jew. He was the lowest form of life to them, sub-human, considered a traitor. Tax collectors were seen as ripping off their brethren. Zaccheus was a short man, that's why he had to climb a fig tree to see the Messiah in this parable.

Fig tree

First we must have a quick look at what is so peculiar about a fig tree. On the fig

tree, we must keep in mind the flowers are inside the fruit, you can't even see the flower on a fig tree unless you look very very close. On the fig tree, if you see leaves there should be fruit. Yeshua saw Zaccheus in the fig tree, knew that he was a good man in his heart and wanted to believe. Yeshua knew there was fruit in the man, hidden to those who refused to look closely at him. The flower of repentance was inside Zaccheus but the people around him never saw the blossom. All they could see was a tax-collector. Zaccheus, who came with the faith of a child, was in the fruit tree and it was time for him to come out and produce fruit for the kingdom.

Zaccheus (meaning innocence in Hebrew) didn't come out of the fig tree and ask what he should do, he said what he would do. He offered half his money right up front to help the poor. The other half was going to be used to make restitution to those he had cheated in the past. He admitted in the text that he had cheated and said he would pay them back four times as much as the law required. **Exod. 21:37** *"If someone steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he is to pay five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep."* (CJB) This would mean that he would be left with nothing, that he would be giving his all to follow Yeshua's teaching. He was restoring things to those he cheated and would be left with nothing. **Deut. 18:13** *"You shall be blameless before the Adonai Elohim."* Zaccheus wanted to show the people he was a changed man and he did so. He had faith. He not only had faith, but he was willing to put that faith into action by restoring himself in the eyes of the people.

Believe is a verb, it includes action, and Zaccheus by his willingness to give up everything he had accumulated, was publicly putting his faith into action. This is what every person who claims to believe in Yeshua should do in his life. We must be willing to give our all in order to accept the blessings and peace Yah makes available to all those who are verbs. All those who are reaching toward eternal salvation with the King of Kings.

Now prophetically speaking, **Matt. 24:32** *"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;"* we see Yeshua was giving us a hint of when the "Day of the Lord" was coming, by reminding us of the cycle of the fig tree. The end of the fig tree cycle was in the fall during the Fall Feasts. That's when Yeshua returns. This all relates to the judgement of the nations at the end during the fall harvest.

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