

# TRUTH & RIGHT

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## ZACCHEUS

“He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. So 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. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, ‘Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.’ And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly,” Luke 19:1-6. If we could hear Zaccheus, himself, relate his conversion to Christ, it might very well be this three-part statement, “He saw me, He welcomed me, He changed me.” **He Saw Me.** “When Jesus came to the place, He looked

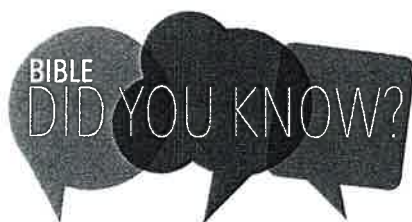
up...” (Luke 19:5). When most saw Zaccheus, they would have been filled with such disdain and disgust, it would have been hard for them to see anything more than the short, rich, tax-collector he had become. From the statement made from the crowd, it becomes painfully obvious that “a man called by the name of Zaccheus” is no more than “a man who is a sinner,” (Lk. 19:7). For all who knew him, this was the summation of all they saw in Zaccheus, and for all they were concerned, was all anyone else needed to see in him as well. But Jesus saw more. When Jesus looked up at the short, rich tax-collector in the sycamore tree, it must have shocked and moved Zaccheus to meet someone who saw the bigger picture of Zaccheus’ life. The name, Zaccheus, means “pure.” This despised and

viewed traitor among his people was once an innocent little baby. He had parents who loved him very much and named him, “pure”, with the hopes he would live a pure and holy life before God. But somewhere along the way, that innocent child with the hopes of being rich in righteousness, grew to develop a sinful heart full of such greed he would be willing to destroy his very reputation in order to become rich in worldly wealth. When Jesus saw Zaccheus, He saw the whole picture, and looked with such compassion and sympathy, that He saw a pure heart that had become lost along the way in the sinful world it grew up in. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost,” (Luke 19:10). Jesus not only looked at Zaccheus in sympathy of what he once was, but in hope of what he could become again. **He Welcomed Me.** “...He looked up and said to him, ‘Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house,’ (Luke 19:5). Being a chief tax collector, it is most likely Zaccheus had heard of the shocking reception for Jesus a certain tax collector named Levi held, where a huge crowd of tax collectors and sinners were the primary invited guests. This gathering sent shock waves

through the community prompting many to question the preferred company of the prophesied Messiah. “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” (Luke 5:30). Given the excitement in the actions of Zaccheus, running ahead of the crowd and climbing a tree to make sure he wouldn’t miss getting a good view of Jesus passing through, you can picture the wonder and enthusiastic curiosity running through his mind. “Would Jesus welcome someone like me in His presence too?” Imagine the excitement it must have filled him with to find Zaccheus would get the best seat in the city to see Jesus, even better than the seat he found in the sycamore tree he climbed to get a better view. He would be seated right next to Jesus in his very own home! **He Changed Me.** “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham,” (Luke 19:9). In the house, Zaccheus was undoubtedly a captive audience for the message Jesus gave him. While we don’t have the words of Jesus recorded for us, we can get a pretty good idea based on the fact the primary reason He is in Jericho is because He is on His way to Jerusalem, and He has previously revealed to His disciples what was going to

happen there. “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again,” (Luke 18:31-33). The compassionate, welcoming message of forgiveness of sins and the nature of the Kingdom of God was too compelling for Zaccheus to pass up and it changes him. “Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, ‘Behold, Lord, 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,’” (Luke 19:8). What a wonderful day of salvation it was for Zaccheus and how wonderful it continues to be for all who will be open to hear the message of good news today! Let us learn from this encounter with Zaccheus how we may be effective in helping sinners find salvation. When we see sinners, let us, like Jesus, be willing to see the whole picture. Sinners are so much more than a quick title summarizing the current events in their life. There is an entire story of a pure soul that

of a pure soul that became lost who Jesus is seeking to restore again. Let us see them this way as well, and welcome them, as Jesus did, in our presence that we may share the good news of salvation. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost,” (Luke 19:10). – Daniel Ruegg



***“There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man swallows it up. He who pursues righteousness and loyalty finds life, righteousness and honor. A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust. He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles. ‘Proud,’ ‘Haughty,’ ‘Scoffer,’ are his names, who acts with insolent pride. The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, for his hands refuse to work; All day long he is craving, while the righteous gives and does not hold back.”***  
***Prov. 21:20-26***

# People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



## **PHILISTINE CITY OF GATH**

In the Bible, Gath was one of the five Philistine cities (“the Pentapolis”) established in Canaan and home to the giant Goliath, who famously fought David (1 Samuel 17). The site of Tell es-Safi, located on the border between the southern coastal plain (Philistia) and the Judean foothills (Shephelah) in central Israel, has been identified by most scholars with Biblical Gath. There, archaeologists uncovered evidence of continuous occupation in the Iron Age. Recently, the Ackerman Family Bar-Ilan University Expedition to Gath, led by Bar-Ilan University archaeology professor Aren Maeir, announced that the entrance gate as well as fortifications belonging to the Philistine settlement have been found. During the early period of the Iron Age, the Philistines began to extend their rule beyond Philistia and were therefore in constant conflict with the neighboring Israelites. In recent years, some scholars have claimed that Philistine Gath was not a dominant, well-fortified city during the Iron Age IIA (10<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> centuries), the period immediately after the separation of the neighboring “United Kingdom” of David and Solomon into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. This summer, the archaeological team under the direction of Maeir began to excavate in the lower city at Tell es-Safi to investigate whether or not Gath had been fortified in the Iron Age. What they uncovered were the remains of a monumental city gate and large-scale fortifications of the Iron Age city. “In the past, we saw evidence of this, but could not find definite proof,” Prof. Aren Maeir told *Bible History Daily*. “Once the remains were found in the specific trench, we ‘connected the dots’ regarding other features we could see on the surface, and then began excavating them as well.” The archaeological team also uncovered evidence of a metallurgical production area in the Iron IIA city. In previous seasons, the excavation made a number of exciting discoveries that helped paint a picture of life in Philistine Gath, including houses, cultic finds, Philistine burials and a large homed altar whose dimensions are similar to those given in Exodus 30:2. “We can also see influences from the Israelite and other local cultures on the Philistines.”

