

# Bible Stories Alive for All the World

Originally written and told by Kitty Anna Griffiths

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## Why Jesus Came Down to Earth

A happy and blessed Christmas to you and your loved ones! In the midst of our celebrations we must remember why Jesus came down to earth. He told us plainly in the story below. Mrs. G told the story to children on television. We have now edited it for translation into eight languages.

### Jesus Befriends Zacchaeus

All Jericho was excited. Jesus was going to walk through their town, and they were all going to see Him. But one man was alone in his mansion talking to himself. "Nobody loves me. Everybody hates me. Nobody wants to come to my house. I haven't got a friend in the world."

It was true. Nobody loved Mr. Zacchaeus. He was a traitor to his own country because he collected taxes for the hated Roman government. He was the chief tax-collector for a very big area, and he was very rich. He was especially hated because he charged people too much tax and kept the money for himself. He was a thief.

When he walked down the street, children never called out, "Hi, Mr. Zacchaeus!" No, when a group of children saw Mr. Zacchaeus coming, they wanted to shout out, "Mean old cheat! You rob our dads at the customs. You charge too much tax. That's why you're so rich."

Well, now Zacchaeus heard some wonderful news. Jesus of Nazareth was going to walk through Jericho today! Zacchaeus was excited. "I want to see Jesus!" Zacchaeus said to himself. "People talk about Jesus and the marvellous things He does. Yes, yes, I must see Jesus, what kind of man He is."

At the entrance to the city, a large crowd had now gathered around someone. They were slowly walking into town along the main road. "Jesus must be there," Zacchaeus said to himself. "Crowds flock round Jesus." Zacchaeus hurried over to see Him. But Zacchaeus was

a little man, and he was too short to see Jesus over the crowd. "What shall I do?" he asked. "I know!"

Zacchaeus ran up the road in the direction the crowd was walking, till he came to a sycamore tree. Quick as a wink, chief tax-collector Zacchaeus climbed up the trunk of that sycamore tree and crawled along a thick branch that spread over the road.



"I'll hide in among these big green leaves. Nobody will see me up here," Zacchaeus said, as he stretched flat on his tummy along the branch that spread over the road. The big green leaves hid him completely, and his eyes looked down where Jesus would soon pass by.

"I'll see Jesus, and He won't see me," said little Mr. Zacchaeus. "Ah, now here comes the crowd. Jesus is

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coming. I'm so glad I'm up here. Now I can look straight down at Him.

"Oh, oh, He's under my branch right now." Then Zacchaeus got the surprise of his life. Jesus stopped and looked up into the tree right into Zacchaeus's eyes. And Zacchaeus nearly rolled off his branch when Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because I must stay at your house today."

A shudder of horror went through the crowd. "Did Jesus say 'Zacchaeus'? Chief tax-collector Zacchaeus? Why, he's the biggest cheat in this town!"

"No, no, never! It must be some other Zacchaeus. Jesus would never have anything to do with chief thief Zacchaeus. Never! He robs people left and right. Overcharges us for taxes all the time, he does!"

The crowd stared up at the tree and waited. Somebody uncurled off a branch and slithered down the trunk. "Why, yes! It is him! It's little Zacchaeus! That awful cheat!"

Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus with great joy. "Jesus has asked to come to my house! He's treating me as a friend." Zacchaeus couldn't believe it. And all eyes glared at the despised little man as he walked home with his new friend, Jesus.

"What ever is Jesus thinking?" the crowd said. "Many nice, good people in Jericho would have been delighted to have Jesus stay at their house today. But look at the kind of man Jesus chooses to stay with. Zacchaeus! And Zacchaeus is a big sinner."

It was God's plan. Zacchaeus was a Jew, and God had sent Jesus into the world to bring back to Him Jewish people who had strayed like sheep and were lost. Now Jesus was going to talk to Zacchaeus and bring him to God.

Some of the crowd followed the two new friends,

Jesus and Zacchaeus, and heard their conversation in Zacchaeus's house.

As they sat together, Jesus talked and Zacchaeus listened. The words of Jesus were not ordinary words. They were words that gave people new life. As Zacchaeus listened, he turned from his sins. He gave himself to God and experienced God's forgiveness.

Oh, he was so happy! He stood up and said to Jesus, "Lord, I am now going to give half of my money and half of everything I have to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone on his taxes I will pay him back four times more."

Jesus said for everybody to hear, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham" – a true believer. Yes, Zacchaeus had shown that he was a true believer.

Jesus told the listening crowd why He had come down from heaven to earth: "I came to seek lost people and to save them."

**"Zacchaeus, hurry  
and come down be-  
cause I must stay at  
your house today."**

**Please pray** for us and all our teams of translators and producers. We urgently need another helper to speed up our editing and writing. Pray that the Lord will provide all our needs.

Thank you for being partners with us in this great venture of telling the children of the world about Jesus Christ and His gift of eternal life.

In His service,



**Gerald Griffiths, President**

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