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Zacchaeus' Encounter with Jesus (Luke 19:1–10): An Embodiment of the Paschal Mystery

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Abstract: Scholars have overlooked the significance of Zacchaeus' movements in Luke 19:1–10. They are generally understood as a means of circumventing the crowd, a demonstration of his eagerness, an expression of his desire to see Jesus from a safe distance, or as a humorous scene. However, the captivating details of his ascent and descent from the tree call for a more satisfying explanation. The characterisation of the rich toll collector carries pejorative overtones but afterwards he is counted among the lost who are saved. This transformation occurs through his participation in Jesus' paschal mystery as represented by his climbing and coming down the tree.

Keywords: Zacchaeus, *ἀναβαίνω*, *καταβαίνω*, Sycamore Tree, Paschal Mystery, Chariton

Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus (19:1–10)[1] has attracted a lot of attention in commentaries and scholarly literature. This passage focuses on Zacchaeus, who, seeking to see Jesus, runs ahead and climbs a sycamore tree (19:3–4), and then hastily comes down when Jesus commands him to do so (19:5–6). His conspicuous actions, especially the ascent and descent of the tree, are motivated indirectly (19:3) and directly (19:5) by Jesus. The fact that the initiative comes from Jesus is confirmed when he says that 'the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost' (19:10). Few authors have commented on these Jesus-inspired actions, emphasising instead a later section of the passage (19:7–10), in part because the mere presence of the crowd which hides Jesus from view (19:3) is as nothing compared to the formidable grumbling hostility of everyone present (19:7). However, Jesus has invited himself (19:5) and come to the home of Zacchaeus (19:6), which not only fulfils but also exceeds the latter's desire to see Jesus and results in his transformation (19:8). This resolution results in the grumbling of all present (19:7) and is later commented on by Jesus (19:9–10). The conspicuous actions instigated by Jesus deserve close examination, especially given Zacchaeus' transformation which is strongly emphasised in the passage.

A recent article explored how Levi embodies the paschal mystery through his actions in response to Jesus' call (5:27–29).[2] Scholars often note multiple connections between

1 Only chapter and verse numbers are indicated for references to Luke's Gospel.

2 L. Macnamara, "Levi's Call: An Embodiment of the Paschal Mystery," *Bib* 104/1 (2023) 78–92.

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the Levi and Zacchaeus episodes: both feature named toll collectors (5:27; 19:2), both respond to Jesus (5:28; 19:5–6a) and provide him with hospitality (5:29; 19:6b), which elicits grumbling (5:30; 19:7) followed by Jesus stating the purpose of his mission (5:32; 19:10). Links are also highlighted between the raising of the paralytic (5:17–26) and the Zacchaeus episode: the vertical movements to overcome the obstacle of the crowd involving the roof (5:18–19) and tree (19:3–6), the objection to Jesus' response (5:21; 19:7), and the Son of Man speaking of the forgiveness of sins (5:22–24) and of saving the lost (19:10).[3]

Zacchaeus' movements are most often understood as a means of circumventing the crowd, but also as a demonstration of his eagerness,[4] a desire to see Jesus from a safe distance,[5] or, according to most recent interpretations, as a humorous/undignified scene.[6] Some scholars have postulated that Luke is drawing from the account of Abraham's hospitality in Genesis 18:1–16,[7] but this only applies to the running ahead, the haste, and the tree, not the vertical movements.[8] Others have viewed the hospitality of Rahab to the two spies in Joshua 2 as forming the background to the text, but it does not account for the movements either.[9] Here, a literary theological interpretation is adopted based on the linguistic cues provided by Luke in the text. The full import of Zacchaeus' actions which result in Jesus and His salvation coming to Zacchaeus' house have been overlooked. Through the vertical movements, he, in a similar manner to Levi, embodies the death and resurrection, which again, like in the Levi episode, is followed by a post-resurrection meal where salvation and new life for the lost are celebrated.

1. Zacchaeus – A Complex Character

Readers' attention, summoned from the outset in the command ἰδού, is sustained through the elaborate introduction of Zacchaeus (19:2). A double formula indicates the name (ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι and καλούμενος) and two further attributes are each introduced by an emphatic καὶ αὐτός. Readers are to take note of this character, his profession, and his status. The name is

3 R.C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts. A Literary Interpretation*. I. *The Gospel of Luke* (Philadelphia, PA: Eerdmans 1986) 104–105, 112–113.

4 Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity*, 122; J.B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Fortress 1997) 669.

5 M. Wolter, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT 5; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2008) 612.

6 A.-J. Levine – B. Witherington III, *The Gospel of Luke* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2018) 511; A.R. Solevåg, "Zacchaeus in the Gospel of Luke: Comic Figure, Sinner, and Included 'Other'," *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 14/2 (2020) 234.

7 A.C. Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited: Luke 19:8 as a Defense," *Bib* 71/2 (1990) 168–172; A.E. Arterbury, "Zacchaeus: 'A Son of Abraham'?," *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels.* III. *The Gospel of Luke* (ed. T. Hatina) (LNTS 376; London – New York: Clark 2010) 18–31.

8 A. Landi, *Luca. Introduzione e commento* (Commentarii biblici; Brescia: Queriniana 2024) 559.

9 J. Drury, *Tradition and Design in Luke's Gospel* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1976) 72–74; Mitchell, "Zacchaeus," 164–165. Drury's position has been strongly challenged. See J. O'Hanlon, "The Story of Zacchaeus and the Lukan Ethic," *JSNT* 12/4 (1981) 6–9.

Jewish (2 Macc 10:19) and is the equivalent of the Hebrew name Zakkai (Ezra 2:9; Neh 7:14; cf. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai), a name which means 'pure' or 'innocent'. The root זָכָה is often used in parallelism to צַדִּיק (Psa 51:6; Job 15:14; 25:4).[10] The name suggests an impeccable character, righteousness, and purity. This contrasts with the profession (chief toll collector) and (in Luke's perspective) with the status (wealthy), a contrast emphasised by the double καὶ αὐτός.[11]

1.1. A Chief Toll Collector – ἀρχιτελώνης

Despite deploying the only occurrence of ἀρχιτελώνης in the extant Greek literature up to the time of Luke, the Gospel mentions many toll collectors.[12] They first occur among those who seek baptism from John and whom he castigates as a brood of vipers (3:7, 12). They and the soldiers are the only two named groups mentioned among the crowds who question John as to what they should do (3:12, 14). His response suggests that they are guilty of fraud and extortion (συκοφαντεῖν [3:14]). The Pharisee's self-assessment in the parable: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves (ἅρπαγες), rogues (ἄδικοι), adulterers, or even like this toll collector' (18:11) points to the extreme iniquity of toll collectors, a point of view shared widely in antiquity. Zacchaeus seems to exemplify this negative portrayal, when he later promises to reimburse anyone whom he may have defrauded (19:8). Furthermore, his profession situates him within the oppressive imperial taxation regime of a foreign occupier and likely provokes the opprobrium of his fellow Jews.

The universality of this pejorative view of toll collectors has been challenged recently by El Mansy, who, while acknowledging the broadly negative profile of toll collectors in the ancient literature, edicts, inscriptions and papyri, notes that the sources contain some positive depictions of individual toll collectors.[13] Drawing principally from the Nemesios archive at Philadelphia (Egypt 30–60 C.E.) she argues that toll collectors were often well integrated into their communities and frequently had business dealings with those they were expected to exact tolls from. While many practiced extortion, others were advocates for the local population.[14]

The Lukan portrayal is also not uniform. Toll collectors seek out John to be baptised (3:7, 12; 7:29) and seek Jesus (15:1–2) as Zacchaeus does (19:3–4). Although viewed as sinners by many characters (Pharisees and Scribes [5:30], Pharisees [15:2], the wider public [7:34], the toll collector of the parable [18:13]), the narrator tends to distinguish toll collectors from sinners (5:29; 15:1). This trend is followed in the Zacchaeus episode, where the crowd identifies Zacchaeus as a sinner (19:7), while the narrator simply states that

10 J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* (AB 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1981) 1223.

11 Some Old Testament passages promise wealth as a reward for wisdom and observance of the law (e.g. Prov 8:18) or simply as a gift of God (Prov 10:22).

12 Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 1223.

13 A. El Mansy, *Τελῶναι im Neuen Testament. Zwischen sozialer Realität und literarischem Stereotyp* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2024) 350–351.

14 A. El Mansy, "Levi, Zachäus & Co: Der τελώνης als Stereotyp," *EvTh* 84/2 (2024) 85–94, esp. 90–92.

he is a rich toll collector (19:2). Prior to Zacchaeus, readers encounter the toll collector in the parable (18:9–14) where he goes down to his home justified (18:14). This might be viewed as an anticipation of the outcome for Zacchaeus to whose home salvation also comes (19:9). While readers are likely to have a negative perception of toll collectors, Luke encourages a reconsideration of that image, viewing them as being open to salvation and often becoming recipients of it (3:12; 5:27–32; 7:29; 15:1; 18:10–14). Zacchaeus however is a chief toll collector.[15] The risks associated with his profession are therefore magnified.[16]

1.2. Rich – πλούσιος

The initial introduction of Zacchaeus concludes with the observation that he is rich. The order of the information regarding Zacchaeus, that he is a toll collector and then that he is rich, both emphasises his wealth and suggests that it is a result of his professional activity. The income of toll collectors derives from the surplus charges on tolls which are levied on the people, many of whom live at subsistence level. Toll collectors are generally known to be rapacious and greedy. Zacchaeus' wealth provides an objective indictment. His greater wealth as a chief toll collector would evoke stronger opprobrium from the general population and from the established elite who would view him as a *parvenu* since his wealth was acquired rather than inherited.

Wealth and possessions have strongly negative associations for Luke. God favours the poor rather than the wealthy (1:53; 4:18; 6:20, 24–25; 7:22; 16:22) and Jesus' disciples are to be generous to the poor and needy (6:30; 12:33; Acts 4:32–35; 6:1–6) and to be wary of possessions (12:15), since excessive attachment to wealth can prove fatal (parables of the rich farmer [12:16–21] and of the rich man and Lazarus [16:19–31]; account of Ananias and Sapphira [Acts 5:1–11]). A choice must be made between serving God or wealth (16:13). Shortly before the account of Zacchaeus, the potential dangers of wealth are strongly emphasised: a rich ruler's great wealth results in great sadness as Jesus commands him to sell all his possessions, distribute them to the poor and then follow him (18:18–23). Jesus, observing him, teaches that entry into the kingdom of God is very difficult for the wealthy (18:24–25). There is no record of the rich ruler's response, which is somewhat ominous.[17] Zacchaeus, who is both a ruler (chief toll collector) and a rich man, resembles all too closely the sad ruler. These expectations recently emphasised by Luke are overturned when Zacchaeus proves to be a model of generosity (19:8). His transformation requires an explanation.

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15 The chief toll collector would have opportunities (legal or otherwise) for a good income from the toll station at Jericho at the border of Judea and Perea. See C. Riedo-Emmenegger, *Prophetisch-messianische Provokateure der Pax-Romana. Jesus von Nazaret und andere Störenfriede im Konflict mit dem Römischen Reich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2005) 137.

16 For a fuller discussion of Luke's portrayal of toll collectors and the inherent dangers of the profession, see Macnamara, "Levi's Call," 79–81.

17 T.M. Troftgruben notes that while Matthew and Mark report the rich man's departure, Luke reports only that he is sad. The lack of closure leaves the possibility of a response open. See "Unanswered Invitations to the Way of Jesus: Open-Ended Stories in Luke's Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51–19:44)," *CurTM* 51/4 (2024) 12.

1.3. Zacchaeus Seeks to See Jesus

Readers are given insight into Zacchaeus' inner thoughts as it is twice reported that he wishes to see Jesus (19:3–4), presumably because he has heard reports about Jesus (4:14, 37) and more specifically that he is passing through Jericho (19:1). The first mention indicated by the conative imperfect ἐζήτει (19:3) implies that his attempts to see Jesus are repeatedly frustrated. It is striking that an official with authority to levy tolls is powerless to circumvent the crowd. He runs ahead and climbs a tree so that he might see Jesus as he passes by on the road. Zacchaeus might stand on the road which Jesus is about to take and meet him in person. Given his official position, it is unlikely that the crowd would push him aside. Instead, Zacchaeus chooses a good vantage point which is hidden from view, so that while he can see everything, no one can see him. This is an unusual way of encountering Jesus in the Gospel.

Characters encounter Jesus in a variety of ways. Jesus comes and heals (the man with unclean spirit [4:33–37]; leper [5:12–15]; man with withered hand [6:6–11]; son of widow of Nain [7:11–15]; crippled woman [13:10–17]; man with dropsy [14:1–6] etc.) or recruits disciples (Simon Peter, sons of Zebedee [5:1–11]; Levi [5:27–28]; the twelve [6:13–16]). More often crowds come to Jesus (4:42; 5:1; 6:17; 9:11, 37; 11:14, 27, 29; 12:1 etc.). Some of those who come ask Jesus to heal their loved ones (Simon's mother-in-law [4:38–39]; Jairus' daughter [8:40–42, 49–56]; father's possessed son [9:38–43]; etc.) or bring loved ones to Jesus (those ill at Capernaum [4:42]; paralytic [5:17–26]; etc.), or request Jesus' assistance via intermediaries (Centurion [7:2–10]). Some come to seek healing for themselves (the sinful woman [7:36–50]; the haemorrhagic woman [8:42b–48]; the ten lepers [17:12–19]; the blind man [18:35–43]) and their faith is commended, but others seek Jesus out and the encounter fails to bring about their transformation (Herod [9:7–9; 13:31; 23:7–12]; those unable to assume the role of disciple [9:57–62]; the rich ruler [18:18–25]).

Zacchaeus seeks to see Jesus for himself, but unlike others who engage him directly, he seeks to see him from afar and remain hidden from view. At this point, he may be simply curious about Jesus in a manner initially very much resembling Herod (9:7; 19:3). He shares the clandestine approach of the haemorrhagic woman who touches Jesus from behind under the cover of the crowd to obtain her healing (8:44), but he maintains a safe distance. Unlike the chasm that separates the rich man from Abraham and Lazarus (16:26), the gulf between Zacchaeus and Jesus is somehow to be bridged.

1.4. Small in Stature – τῇ ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς

Zacchaeus is unable to see Jesus ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου (19:3). The preposition may be accompanied by a partitive genitive, i.e. 'from the crowd' or may indicate causality, 'because of the crowd'.[18] A more precise reason for his inability to see is τῇ ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς which can be translated as either being 'small in stature' (short) or 'small in years' (young). The fact that he faces a physical obstruction from the crowd and chooses to circumvent it by climbing the tree

18 BDF §164.1c; §210.

suggest that he may be of small stature. Although early interpreters such as Theodore of Mopsuestia and Ephrem the Syrian view Jesus as being short,[19] commentators traditionally understand the short stature here to refer to Zacchaeus (19:3). However, it has recently been persuasively argued that the referent is ambiguous and that it is possible to understand the phrase as referring to Jesus.[20] This remains unlikely, given that no physical descriptors for Jesus are provided in the Gospel.

In antiquity, personal physical characteristics were believed to reflect personality and moral quality. These associations were studied within the framework of a science known as physiognomy. Parsons explored the associations with short stature in ancient literature, namely smallness in spirit, understood as low self-expectation and greediness, and provided some examples from ancient literature, where it is often employed as part of a rhetoric of ridicule.[21] This interpretation has been challenged, as it was noted that the physiognomy manuals are not consistent in their interpretation of the significance of short stature and that the selective negative portrayal serves Parsons' purpose to showcase Zacchaeus' later transformation.[22] However, as evidenced by the examples from ancient literature, readers might well draw negative associations from the short stature reference, especially given the earlier characterisation of Zacchaeus as a rich chief toll collector. The ambiguity in the manuals regarding the significance of short stature leaves open the assessment of the true character of Zacchaeus.

Although this has been rarely noticed, in the context of Luke, short stature is portrayed positively. Those of short stature are not to be concerned about their size for they cannot add one cubit to their height (ἡλικία [12:25]). The greatest is the least (μικρότερος [9:48]), children are welcomed by Jesus, and it is as children that his hearers will enter the kingdom (18:15–17).[23] Green understands the term both as referring to Zacchaeus' youthfulness and as reflective of his compromised status as a despised toll collector so that the crowd does not grant him access.[24] This speculation falters since Zacchaeus as a chief toll collector is unlikely to be in the first flush of youth. Furthermore, as he has authority to levy tolls, he can enforce public respect of his person.

Despite the ambiguity as to who is short, not being sufficiently tall renders it impossible for Zacchaeus to see Jesus over the crowd. Now, he must take special measures to get sight of Jesus. While the short stature and the resourcefulness to overcome the limitation emphasise Zacchaeus' persistence in seeking to see Jesus (cf. 18:1–8), the tree and the unusual movements call for a further explanation.

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19 J.R. Harris, "On the Stature of Our Lord," *BJRL* 10/1 (1926) 114–120.
20 I.T. Soon, "The Little Messiah: Jesus as τῇ ἡλικίᾳ μικρός in Luke 19:3," *JBL* 142/1 (2023) 151–170.
21 M. Parsons, "'Short in Stature': Luke's Physical Description of Zacchaeus," *NTS* 47/1 (2001) 50–57.
22 See Aristotle, [*Physiogn.*] 813b; Polemon, *Physiogn.*, Ch.60, B56, 57; Soon, "Little Messiah," 161–165.
23 W.P. Loewe, "Towards an Interpretation of Lk 19:1–10," *CBQ* 36/3 (1974) 325.
24 Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 669–670.

2. The *ficus sycomorus*– συκομορέα – Fig Mulberry Tree

The tree which Zacchaeus climbs is commonly rendered as 'sycamore', a rough transliteration that leads to confusion, for the *ficus sycomorus* is a type of fig tree. Galen suggests that the συκομορέα is so named because its fruit resembles both συκῆ (fig) and μόρον, which designates the berry fruit of many plants.[25] The tree resembles the συκῆ (fig tree) which supplied the fig leaves for Adam and Eve to sew garments to cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7) after they ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17; 3:1–6). Furthermore, the hiding of Zacchaeus in the tree evokes the hiding of Adam and Eve among the trees of the garden when they hear the sound of the Lord God approaching (Gen 3:8–10). Zacchaeus has characteristics considered suggestive of sin (his profession, wealth, and short stature) and he too decides to hide when he hears that the Lord Jesus is coming along the road and to view him from the leafy fig tree. The aftermath of the fall involves the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden that they may not have access to the tree of life (Gen 3:22–24). The allusions to Genesis 3 initially cast a pall over the figure of Zacchaeus.

However, there are several references to fig trees in Luke, with their expected figs symbolising spiritual virtues of good works (6:43–44) and repentance (13:6–9), whereas when the fig tree of the later parable sprouts leaves, eschatological redemption is at hand (21:28–30).[26] The account of the cursed fig tree with no fruit (Matt 21:18–20; Mark 11:12–14, 20–21) is absent from Luke's Gospel. Instead, this tradition is taken up by Luke into a parable of a fig tree which has no fruit for three years in a row but gets a reprieve for another year and so may yet bear fruit (13:6–9). For Luke's readers a fig tree elicits expectations of a positive response to imminent salvation.

For ancient readers fig trees may have other associations. In the *Iliad*, the wild fig tree, although the term used is ἐρινεός, is a lookout point outside the walls of Troy (*Il.* 22.145).[27] Zacchaeus' fig tree also serves as a lookout. Ominously, the tree is mentioned during the final battle between Achilles and Hector, whose fate will shortly be sealed with Zeus' scales (*Il.* 22.208–213). This tree, ἐρινεός, has more positive associations in the *Odyssey*. During a fierce storm from Zeus, Odysseus saves himself from drowning by clinging to the tree trunk.[28] This look-out tree appears at pivotal moments where life is either lost (Hector) or saved (Odysseus).

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25 Galen, *Galeni De alimentorum facultatibus* (ed. G. Helmreich) (CMG 5.4.2; Leipzig: Teubner 1923) 2.35.

26 For a fuller discussion, see J.L. Magness, "Who Cares That it Was a Sycamore? Climbing Trees and Playing on Words in Luke 19.1–10," *Leaven* 5/2 (1997) 6.

27 E.S. Forster, "Trees and Plants in Homer," *ClR* 50/3 (1936) 100.

28 Homer, *Od.* 12.432–436. Interestingly, Odysseus clings to the tree like a bat (12.433). Later, bats are used as a metaphor for the souls of the dead (24.6–10), so Odysseus' life appears also to hang in the balance. See C. Anghelina, "Clinging to the Fig Tree: A Note on Od. 12.432–6," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 158/1 (2015) 12–15. For other possible allusions in Luke-Acts to Homer, see D.R. MacDonald, *The Gospels and Homer. Imitations of Greek Epic in Mark and Luke-Acts* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2014).

The later use of συκοφαντέω (defraud [19:8]) is suggestive of a word play with συκομορέα. Such word plays are not infrequent in Greek literature, particularly comedy.[29] The 'defraud' vocabulary frequently occurs with 'righteous' vocabulary as its antonym in the LXX (Lev 19:11–13; Amos 2:6–8; Job 35:7–8; Psa 119:121–122, 134–138; 72:1–4; Prov 14:31–32; 28:1–3, 16; Eccl 5:8).[30] The link between the tree and the action of defrauding evokes one possible interpretation of the chief toll collector, but his name suggests otherwise. Zacchaeus may live up to his name.

There is a hesitancy among the textual witnesses around the spelling of συκομορέα with a significant minority reading συκομωρέα.[31] Ancient translations usually opt for a transliteration, but the Syriac tradition opts for an etymological gloss, namely 'tasteless fig tree'. This implies the omega spelling συκομωρέα with the latter part understood as derived from the adjective μωρός. Although usually it denotes 'foolish', when applied to food it signifies 'dull' or 'tasteless' (cf. cognate verb in 14:34).[32] Cyril of Alexandria develops the foolish etymology in his reading of Luke 19:1–10.[33] The 'foolish' etymology emerges in recent comedic readings of the passage.

There are additional resonances for Luke's readers. Three times the cross of Jesus' crucifixion, in an allusion to Deut 21:23, is referred to as a tree (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29).[34] This association is already popular in the early second century: Barnabas and Polycarp refer to the cross as a tree (*Barn.* 5:13; Phil 8:1); Barnabas views the tree as a type of the cross (*Barn*. 8:1, 5; 12:1, 7) and this is further suggested in the *Letter to Diognetus* when it asks hearers to 'bear the tree [of the λόγος]' (*Diogn*. 12:8) especially given the context of the Passover (*Diogn*. 12:9).[35] The mention of a tree, particularly with someone suspended on the tree, evokes the cross. There are only four characters found on trees in the Gospel: Jesus, the two evildoers, and Zacchaeus. Jesus is crucified (σταυρόω) with one evildoer at either side (23:32–33). Later Luke indicates that the two evildoers (23:39), as also Jesus (Acts 5:30; 10:39), were suspended (κρεμάννυμι). Jesus dies (23:46), as presumably do the two others although this is not narrated. However, the story takes an unexpected turn. Firstly, Jesus promises entry into παράδεισος to one of the evildoers who asked: 'Jesus,

29 Aristophanes, *Av*. 1699; *Plut*. 935.946–947; *Vespes* 145.

30 Magness, " Who Cares That it Was a Sycamore?," 3.

31 A helpful list is supplied by I.N. Mills, "Zacchaeus and the Unripe Figs: A New Argument for the Original Language of Tatian's Diatessaron," *NTS* 66/2 (2020) 211.

32 The Hebrew noun תָּפֵל can signify tasteless thing (Job 6:6) or folly (Lam 2:14).

33 Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarius in Lucam* (ed. J.P. Migne) (Patrologia Graeca 72; Paris: Imprimerie Catholique 1864) 865.

34 The term ξύλον is also used for trees on which Pharaoh will hang his baker (Gen 40:19), on which Haman is hung (Esther 5:14; 6:4; 7:9–10) and on which Joshua hangs the bodies of the five Canaanite kings (Josh 10:26). Josephus rereads the hangings in Genesis and Esther as crucifixions. Paul (Gal 3:13) and Philo (*De Spec. Leg*. 3.152) show that Luke is not alone in rereading Deut 21:23 as referring to crucifixion. See T.C.G. Thornton, "Trees, Gibbets, and Crosses," *JTS* 23/1 (1972) 130–131.

35 For a fuller discussion of ξύλον as a type of the Cross in the Apostolic period see G.Q. Reijners, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature. As Based upon Old Testament Typology* (GCP 2; Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt NV 1965).

remember me when you come into your kingdom' (23:42–43). The term παράδεισος is employed thirteen times in the Septuagint to indicate the garden of Eden (Gen 2:8, 9, 10, 15, 16; 3:1, 2, 3, 8 [2], 10, 23, 24). Access to the garden, which had been closed off, is now opened through the events at the cross. This becomes clearer when Jesus rises from the dead, as foretold, on the third day (Luke 24). The accounts in Acts of the death by hanging on the tree incorporate accounts of God's raising of Jesus (5:30; 10:40; 13:30) and his new role as judge and forgiver of sins (5:31; 10:42; 13:38). The image of someone suspended on a tree is strongly associated with death. However, the outcome is now uncertain.[36] While three men die on trees, Jesus rises from the dead and one of the evildoers has life in paradise, with the other confined to a deathly silence.

3. Zacchaeus' Movements

Apart from Rhoda (Acts 12:13–16), Zacchaeus is perhaps the most quickly moving character in Luke-Acts. The first movement occurs on a horizontal axis, namely running ahead along the road, preceding Jesus on his final journey to Jerusalem. The later movements of climbing and coming down the συκομορέα occur on a vertical axis, with the tree functioning as the axis, suggestive of the Cross at the end of Jesus' journey. The movements are inspired by Jesus and accomplished through him.[37] The narrator never reports that Zacchaeus sees Jesus despite his persistent desire to do so (19:3–4). Instead, it is Jesus who looks up at him and, presumably, it is Jesus who initiates contact between them (19:5a). Later, Jesus commands him to come down (19:5b), which Zacchaeus immediately obeys (19:6a). While Jesus is clearly the initiator of the actions, there is no obvious explanation of why Zacchaeus has changed, welcoming Jesus joyfully to his house (19:6b) and providing alms to the poor and ample compensation to anyone he had defrauded (19:8).[38] Yet, the overlooked movements inspired by Jesus may hold the answer to the process of Zacchaeus' transformation.

3.1. Runs Ahead – προδραμών

Zacchaeus, having failed in his attempts to view Jesus over the crowd, adopts a new strategy and tries to see him by running on ahead. The image of the toll collector with his short legs working wildly falls well short of the Graeco-Roman ideal of masculinity. The perfect male should move slowly with a long stride and thereby demonstrate possession of noble

36 The three references to the cross as tree in Acts (and Deut 21:23) each use the term ξύλον, which features prominently in Genesis 1–3, especially for the tree of life (Gen 2:9; 3:11, 12, 17, 22, 24) and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:9, 17; 3:3, 6). While the latter tree is associated with death, the former is associated with life. The tree designating Jesus' cross may allude to both trees of the garden, since it is the instrument of Jesus' death but it is also followed by his resurrection.

37 C. Broccardo, "'È andato ad alloggiare da un peccatore' (Luca 19,7). Zaccheo e la prassi problematica di Gesù," *Sul sentiero dei sacramenti. Scritti in onore di E.R. Tura nel suo 70° compleanno* (ed. C. Corsato) (Padova: Messaggero di Sant'Antonio 2007) 165–168.

38 Broccardo, "'È andato ad alloggiare da un peccatore'," 167.

qualities: *fides*, *sinceritas*, *magna efficacia*, *animus elatus et irae absentia*.[39] The rushed walk suggests that such qualities are lacking and entails the risk of association with the demeaning comic figure of the *servus currens* as observed in the figure of Rhoda (Acts 12:12–17).[40] He falls far short of the Aristotelian ideal: καὶ κίνησις δὲ βραδεῖα τοῦ μεγαλοψύχου δοκεῖ εἶναι. The man of great soul moves slowly, has a weighty voice and steady speech, does not hurry (οὐ σπευστικός).[41] The physiognomic associations of his short stature seem to be confirmed by his undignified haste.

However, the running Rhoda is viewed more positively when contrasted with the sluggish response of Peter and the household, and she is seen also as a fulfilment of Acts 2:18.[42] There is a reversal of roles, with the servant proving to be the model disciple.[43] Other characters who run in the Gospel do so in a positive context; the father of the prodigal son runs to welcome his son (15:20) and Peter who, though he disbelieves the testimony of the women, is the only disciple to rush to the tomb (24:9–12). The intensity and eagerness of Zacchaeus' attempts to see Jesus, in response to what he has been told about him, is emphasised by his running, but whether it is incipient belief or curiosity is not yet clear.

The running ahead is complemented by the phrase εἰς τὸ ἔμπροσθεν which is commonly understood as pleonastic. It may hint at Zacchaeus' point of departure, a place where Jesus is but cannot be seen by him, and his destination, where Jesus has yet to come and might be seen by him. The adverbial phrase hints at the distance covered and emphasises the effort the toll collector makes to see Jesus.

There are some movements that can be compared to the episode (18:35–43) immediately preceding the Zacchaeus story in Luke. The blind man draws Jesus' attention by shouting and comes from the roadside to the centre and, after encountering Jesus, follows him. Zacchaeus precedes Jesus and finds a secluded location from which to view him. Nevertheless, both display an eagerness, the first to receive mercy from Jesus, the second at this stage merely to see who Jesus is.

3.2. He Climbs – ἀνέβη

Zacchaeus climbs the συκομορέα. While the action is unexpected, this is the regular verb for going up in Luke-Acts (roof ([5:19; Acts 10:9]); mountain ([9:28]); upper room

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39 Taken from the Physiognomy of Pseudo Aristotle and that of Polemon. See J. Bremner, "Walking, Standing, and Sitting in Ancient Greek Culture," *A Cultural History of Gesture* (eds. J. Bremner – H. Roodenburg) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1991) 17–20.

40 For examples from ancient literature, see J.A. Harrill, "The Dramatic Function of the Running Slave Rhoda (Acts 12.13–16): A Piece of Greco-Roman Comedy," *NTS* 46/1 (2000) 150–157.

41 Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 4.3.34. See D.H. Sick, "Zacchaeus as the Rich Host of Classical Satire," *BibInt* 24/2 (2016) 234.

42 K. Chambers, "'Knock, Knock—Who's There?' Acts 12.6–17 as a Comedy of Errors," *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles* (eds. A.-J. Levine – M. Blinkenstaff) (FCNECW 9; Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press 2006) 92; W.D. Shiell, *Reading Acts. The Lector and the Early Christian Audience* (BIS 70; Leiden: Brill 2004) 180–181.

43 P.E. Spencer, "'Mad' Rhoda in Acts 12: 12–17: Disciple Exemplar," *CBQ* 79/2 (2017) 295.

[Acts 1:13]); heaven [Acts 2:34]; boat [Acts 21:6]). When used with respect to Jerusalem and the Temple (2:42; 18:10, 31; 19:28; Acts 3:1; 11:2; 15:2; 21:12, 15; 24:11) the verb either indicates pilgrimage or has a quasi-liturgical overtone.

It is striking that the verb ἀναβαίνω, often used for a journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (Luke 2:42; John 2:13; 5:1; 7:8, 10; 11:55; 12:20; Acts 11:2; 15:2; 18:22; 21:12, 15; 24:11; 25:1), is only employed once thus far to indicate the journey in the travel narrative. (The occurrence of the verb within the parable of the Pharisee and toll collector [18:10] does not reference the journey to Jerusalem.) The single use referring to the journey shortly before the story of Zacchaeus is particularly prominent. Jesus takes his disciples aside and introduces his most explicit teaching about his passion, death, and resurrection with an inclusive first-person plural use of the verb: ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ιερουσαλήμ (18:31). Up until this point, the journey to Jerusalem has been marked by the verb πορεύομαι especially at the outset of the journey (9:51, 53, 56, 57), but also throughout (10:38; 13:33; 17:11; 19:28, 36 and 13:22 [διαπορεύομαι]). In none of these instances is the first-person plural employed. Through the first-person plural form of the verb ἀναβαίνω, disciples (and readers) are closely associated with this movement. The verb takes on strong paschal allusions with the mention of Jerusalem, the destination of Jesus' final journey, as has been repeatedly recalled through the travel narrative (9:51, 53; 13:22, 33; 17:11; 19:11, 28), and especially because of the most detailed anticipation of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection within the Gospel (18:31–33) that it introduces. The associations between the tree and the cross are amplified by this verb with such strong and recent paschal allusions in the narrative.

The story of Zacchaeus may recall that of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*.[44] Unable to see the crowd of women, Pentheus suggests that if he climbed a tall (lit. 'high necked') fir tree, he could see clearly (ἀμβὰς ἐς ἐλάτην ὑψαύχενα ἴδοιμ ἂν ὀρθῶς [1059–1060]). The stranger bends the tree down and places Pentheus carefully on the top, returning it to its upright position. Here he is seen more than he sees. When Dionysus calls upon the Maenads to punish him, they eventually pull down the tree and tear him apart limb from limb (1063–1139). With such associations, Zacchaeus' perch in the tree points to potential danger and death.

3.3. Come Down – κατάβηθι; Came Down – κατέβη

The verb καταβαίνω occurs twice, employed in Jesus' command to Zacchaeus (19:5) and in the narrator's report of his response (19:6). This verb commonly indicates descent from earthly heights (mountain [6:17]; roof [17:31]; face of Jesus [22:44]) but also descent

44 There are a number of broad thematic similarities between Euripides' *Bacchae* and the Acts, including especially the theme of θεομαχία (*Bacch*. 45; 325; 635–636; 1255–1256; Acts 5:39). There is also a quote, 'kicking against the goad' (*Bacch.* 794–795; Acts 26:14). See D.R. MacDonald, "Classical Greek Poetry and the Acts of the Apostles: Imitations of Euripides' Bacchae," *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (eds. S. Porter – A. Pitts) (Leiden: Brill 2013) 463–496. Luke and Theophilus, the addressee of his writings (Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1–2), appear to have a broad familiarity with the contemporary 'canon' of Hellenist literature. This familiarity does not necessarily imply rigorous study of the literature but may have come from attending public readings and theatre performances, etc.

from the heavens often associated with a theophany (Holy Spirit [3:22]; storm [8:23]; fire [9:54]; sheet with animals [Acts 10:11; 11:5], mistaken assumption of divine origin of Paul and Barnabas [Acts 14:11]). The theophanic associations are not immediately evident here, given that Zacchaeus is coming down from a tree. However, if the tree as shown above may be understood to evoke the cross, then such associations are possible.

The verb is the antonym of ἀναβαίνω and is employed to indicate the journey down from Jerusalem (2:51; 10:30, 31; Acts 8:15, 26; 18:22; 24:1; 25:6, 7) and from the temple (18:14). It is this last use that resonates most with Zacchaeus, who mimics the movements of the toll collector in the parable, who goes up to the temple and goes down justified to his house afterwards (18:14). This allusion and the link to justification bode well for Zacchaeus.

The verb καταβαίνω is absent from the crucifixion scene in Luke. The verb is used twice in Matthew and Mark in the reported speech of those who mock Jesus. Those who happen to pass by Jesus while on the cross deride him by ordering him to come down (κατάβηθι [Matt 27:40]; καταβάς [Mark 15:30]). Shortly after that, the chief priests, scribes (and elders [only Matt]) mock Jesus and call on him to come down (καταβάτω [Matt 27:42; Mark 15:32]). The absence of this verb at the crucifixion in Luke is perhaps more surprising given that the repeated command to Jesus to save himself is preserved (Matt 27:40, 43; Mark 15:30, 31; Luke 23:35, 37). Luke does not include the charge in the mockery at the cross (Matt 27:40; Mark 15:29) that Jesus said he would destroy the temple, but along with the charges at the trial (Matt 26:61; Mark 14:58) transposes this to the trial of Stephen (Acts 6:13–14). This strongly binds Stephen's trial and passion to that of Jesus, showing the continuity of the work of salvation through the first martyrdom. A similar transposition may be at work with the verb καταβαίνω.

Luke reports the mocking command that 'he [Jesus] saved others, so let him save himself' (23:35). The action of saving others is here exemplified in his positive command to Zacchaeus to come down from the tree (19:5) and is later doubly confirmed by Jesus who notes that salvation has come to his house (19:9) and that the Son of Man has come to save the lost (19:10). This command of the passion narrative is transposed with the effect not only of showing that Jesus saves others and in this instance Zacchaeus, but that through ascent and descent of the tree/cross salvation is accomplished.

Later at the cross, in response to the appeal by one of the evildoers crucified at either side of him to be remembered, Jesus promises that σήμερον he will be with him in paradise (23:43). This σήμερον of salvation occurs also for Zacchaeus (19:5, 9). The saving power of Jesus' cross is already anticipated: Zacchaeus' coming down from the tree anticipates the descent from the cross and life in paradise for the repentant evildoer.

3.4. Hurry and Necessity – σπεύσας and δεῖ

The command of Jesus for Zacchaeus to come down is accompanied by an adverbial use of the participle σπεύσας which means 'hurriedly'. The first Lukan use of the verb indicates the manner of the shepherds' journey to Bethlehem. They have just recognised among

themselves that it is the κύριος (Lord) who has revealed everything to them through the angel (2:15). The verb is used to indicate the fulsome response of the shepherds to the Lord's revelation, as they go with haste to find the infant (2:16). So Jesus commands Zacchaeus to come down hurriedly too, and this is precisely what he does. The narrator invokes Jesus' name (19:3, 5, 9) but once refers to him as κύριος (19:8). This immediately precedes the quotation of Zacchaeus' speech in which he addresses Jesus as κύριε. With the preceding use of κύριος by the narrator, readers expect that this use of κύριε signifies at least in part a recognition of Jesus' divine identity. The fulsome response by Zacchaeus which follows is a confirmation of this (19:8).

Luke also employs the associated adverbial phrase μετὰ σπουδῆς (1:39) to indicate the manner of Mary's journey to her cousin Elizabeth, again in response to earlier divine revelation (1:26–38). This is traditionally rendered as 'with haste', but it has been shown recently that the word may also indicate 'care', 'attention to detail', or 'accuracy'.[45] While the verb also carries these semantic possibilities, they are unlikely in the case of Zacchaeus. Nevertheless, both the verbal participle and adverbial phrase are associated with eager responses to divine revelation.

The impersonal verb δεῖ is particularly prominent in Luke. Here, Jesus indicates his divine mission to save the lost (19:10) by his insistence on staying (μένω) at the home of Zacchaeus (19:5).[46] The verb δεῖ is frequently employed to indicate the necessity of Jesus' passion (9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44 [cf. 24:46]; Acts 17:3) and hints at the paschal salvific action of God in Jesus, through the command to descend from the tree/cross and to do so speedily. The dynamic of Jesus' death and resurrection is necessarily already at work as Jesus approaches Jerusalem.

3.5. Ascending and Descending the Cross in Chariton

Crucifixions are commonplace in literary works in antiquity.[47] The person crucified is usually either the object of the active forms of σταυρόω, πήγνυμι, or equivalent, or the subject of an intransitive verb κρεμάννυμι, or passive forms of σταυρόω, or equivalent. The descent from the cross when indicated is usually in the passive voice. There is usually no agency from the moment the prisoner is at the site of crucifixion. *Callirhoe*, a romance novel by Chariton,[48] has several crucifixion scenes (the pirate Theron [3.4.18]; the sixteen rebel

45 D.P. Muller, "Helping the Expectant Mother Elizabeth. The Nature and Purpose of Mary's Journey in Luke 1:39," *CBQ* 85/2 (2023) 290–291.

46 C.H. Cosgrove, "The Divine Δεῖ in Luke-Acts," *NT* 26/2 (1984) 175.

47 See J.G. Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*, 2 ed. (WUNT 2/327; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2019).

48 The dating of the novel is much debated. Most commentators favour a mid-first century C.E. date. See S. Tilg, *Chariton of Aphrodisias and the Invention of the Greek Love Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) 36–79; K. De Temmeran, "Chariton," *Characterization in Ancient Greek Literature. Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* (eds. K. De Temmerman – E. van Emde Boas) (Mn.S 411; Leiden: Brill 2018) IV, 561–577; E. Bowie, "The Chronology of the Earlier Greek Novels since B.E. Perry: Revisions and Precisions," *Ancient Narrative* 2 (2003) 57; B.P. Reardon, "Chariton," *The Novel in the Ancient World* (ed. G.L. Schmeling) (Mn.S 159; Leiden: Brill 1996) 312–317. Others favour a later dating based on linguistic grounds (Hernández Lara and

prisoners [4.2.6–7; 4.3.5]). A principal protagonist, Chaereas, comes close to crucifixion alongside the sixteen prisoners (4.3.5–6): he is mounting (ἐπιβαίνοντα) his cross when given a reprieve and commanded to come down (κατάβηθι) and he does (κατέβαινε). Chaereas later reports his mounting (ἀνέβην) of the cross in a letter to Callirhoe (4.4.10) and again references his mounting (ἀνέβαινον) of the cross when he prepares to hang himself (5.10.6), but when he addresses the people of Syracuse the story alters slightly, as he describes being taken down (καθαιρεθῆναι) from the cross already near death (8.8.4).

The reality of death is not hidden and the sixteen prisoners with Chaereas die on their crosses. The active verbs ἀναβαίνω and καταβαίνω, with the person hung or to be hung as subject, point to the living status of the individual, albeit precarious in the case of ascent. When associated with the climbing of a tree in an allusive paschal context, the verb suggests a sharing in the destiny of Jesus, who is to mount his cross. The descent signifies the rescue from death.

3.6. Zacchaeus Lost (τὸ ἀπολωλός) and Found

Although not an action, Zacchaeus' lost status is the result of actions, suggested especially by the conjunction of his profession as chief toll collector and his wealth. If we assume that Zacchaeus is hiding in the tree, like Adam and Eve after the fall (Gen 3:8–10), then his state of being lost is elevated as he climbs the tree. While Adam and Eve are hiding, Zacchaeus is both hiding and trying to see who Jesus is (19:3). His mixed reaction – knowing himself to be lost and yet looking for a saviour – likens him to Peter, the sinner, who tells the Lord, 'Depart from me,' while falling to Jesus' knees (5:8). What is key here, however, is his status of being lost. Jesus states that he, the Son of Man, comes to save what is lost (τὸ ἀπολωλός [19:10]). Zacchaeus is then like the lost sheep (τὸ ἀπολωλός [15:4]). Jesus, the shepherd, will ultimately climb the tree of the cross to save the lost sheep.[49]

The status of being lost and the use of the verbs of ascent and descent are found together in the episode of the boy Jesus in the temple (2:41–51). Jesus, when he goes up (ἀναβαινόντων [2:42]) on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, gets lost. His parents search for him (ἀναζητέω [2:44, 45]; ζητέω [2:48, 49]) and eventually find him after three days (2:46), when he asserts that ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με (it is necessary for me to be among my Father's things/house [2:49]). He then goes down (κατέβη) with them to Nazareth. From his first appearance,

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Ruiz-Montero) or connections between Chariton's Demetrius and Demetrius the Cynic (Laplace) or Chariton's Dionysius and the Hadrianic sophist Dionysius of Miletus (Jones and Morgan). See C. Hernández Lara, *Estudios sobre et aticismo de Caritón de Afrodisias* (ClByM 29; Amsterdam: Hakkert 1994); C. Ruiz-Montero, "Aspects of the Vocabulary of Chariton of Aphrodisias," *CQ* 41/2 (1991) 489; M. Laplace, "Pour la datation du roman de Chariton: la figure de Démétrios le Cynique, envers du vrai philosophe," *EM* 79/2 (2011) 341–356; C.P. Jones, "La personnalité de Chariton," *Le monde du roman grec, Actes du colloque international tenu à l'École normale supérieure (Paris 17–19 décembre 1987)* (eds. M.-F. Baslez – P. Hoffmann – M. Trédé) (Paris: l'École normale supérieure 1992) 161–167; J.R. Morgan, "Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus," *The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic* (eds. D.S. Richter – W.A. Johnson) (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017) 389–403.

49 I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Sławomir Szkredka to this paragraph.

as has often been noted, Jesus prefigures his passion, death, and resurrection. However, he also prefigures the Zacchaeus episode, climbing and taking up the position of the lost, and then coming down. Jesus comes to ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός (19:10) by assuming the lost state of Zacchaeus in his passion and death. He has come to save others (23:35) rather than himself (23:35, 37, 39).

3.7. Zacchaeus Welcomes Jesus Joyfully

When Jesus looks up at Zacchaeus in the tree, he addresses him by name, although he has not yet met him. While Zacchaeus has sought to see Jesus (19:3–4), he now discovers that Jesus is seeking him. As often in Luke's writings, what seems like a chance encounter has been carefully prepared for both parties.[50] Jesus speaks of needing to come and stay in Zacchaeus' home today (19:5b). This today (σήμερον) signals the present time of salvation (2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 13:32–33; 23:43). Zacchaeus obeys Jesus' command to come down from the tree and welcomes (ὑποδέχομαι) him joyfully to his home. The *dénouement* of the resolution plot with Zacchaeus hosting Jesus and the coming of salvation in the person of Jesus to his home is overlooked because of the later revelation of the identities of Jesus as Lord and Zacchaeus as a son of Abraham (19:8–10).[51] Most commentators situate the transformation of Zacchaeus as occurring from his speech onwards (19:8). They overlook the significance of his ascent and descent of the tree, through which he embodies Jesus' paschal mystery, which in turn concludes the two quests of this episode: Zacchaeus' seeking to see Jesus (19:3–4) and Jesus' search for Zacchaeus (19:5, 10). Zacchaeus' joyful welcoming of Jesus and the salvation he brings already confirms his transformation.

In his speech Zacchaeus addresses Jesus as Lord and promises to give half of his belongings to the poor and declares that he will return fourfold the amount to those he has defrauded (19:8). He does not deny the accusation that he is a sinner, but his situation has changed. His participation in Jesus' death and resurrection results in him receiving the fruits of this mystery, namely the forgiveness of sins (24:46–47) and restoration to life, which is described as the finding of the lost (15:24, 32; 19:10). This finding of the lost and entry into a new existence has already occurred on the roadside (19:5–6a).

Zacchaeus is one of many Lukan characters who embody the paschal mystery.[52] Often this embodiment is observed in the return to life from death or a death-like existence (paralytic [5:17–26]; Centurion's slave [7:1–10]; widow's son [7:11–10]; Gerasene demoniac

50 B. Standaert, "Luc, maître narrateur de la rencontre," *Raconter, interpréter, annoncer: parcours de Nouveau Testament: mélanges offerts à Daniel Marguerat pour son 60ème anniversaire* (eds. E. Steffek – Y. Bourquin) (MdB 57; Genève: Labor et fides 2003) 282–295.

51 For an exposition of the revelation of the identities of Zacchaeus and Jesus, see: J.-N. Aletti, *L'art de raconter Jésus Christ. L'écriture narrative de l'évangile de Luc* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil 1989) 17–38, esp. 27–33.

52 Dennis J. Horton has demonstrated the prominence of this motif in Acts. See: *Death and Resurrection. The Shape and Function of a Literary Motif in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers 2009). The motif is shown through Peter's imprisonment and release narratives (Acts 4:1–21; 5:17–41; 12:1–19), Stephen's death and anticipated resurrection (Acts 7), Paul's dying and rising with Christ (Damascus experience [Acts 9:1–19]; stoning and recovery at Lystra [Acts 14:1–20]; shipwreck and rescue [Acts 27:1–44]) and

[8:26–39]; Jairus' daughter [8:40–42, 49–56]; haemorrhagic woman [8:43–48]). Interestingly, as in the case of Zacchaeus (19:9–10), salvation terminology accompanies these accounts: paralytic (ἀφίημι [5:20–24]); Centurion's slave (διασῴζω [7:3]); widow's son (ἐπισκέπτομαι [7:16]); Gerasene demoniac (σῴζω [8:36]); haemorrhagic woman (σῴζω [8:48]); daughter of Jairus (σῴζω [8:50]). The speeches of Peter and Paul (Acts 2:14–36; 3:12–26; 13:16–41) reveal that 'Jesus' death and resurrection constitute the decisive cause for salvation.'[53] This salvation is already accessible through the ministry of Jesus as seen in these minor characters and in Zacchaeus.

The embodiment of the paschal mystery frequently results in celebrations for the salvation received, either with thanksgiving to God, or as in the case of Zacchaeus, with a meal (Levi [5:29], the lost son [15:23–32], Lazarus [16:25]). Often, murmuring arises from Pharisees, Scribes and others (5:30; 15:2, 25–32; 16:24, 27–28). While Levi, and the lost son and Lazarus of the parables have all passed from death or a death-like situation to life, the observers often have yet to do so.[54] At Jericho, Zacchaeus is already transformed when he hosts Jesus (19:6). All murmur at Jesus accepting the hospitality of a sinner (19:7). The speeches of Zacchaeus and of Jesus (19:8–10) offer all such doubters proof that Zacchaeus is now to be counted among the righteous and saved. The rich toll collector was originally more closely associated with the sad rich ruler (18:18–23) and with the rich man of the parable (16:19–31). However, now identified as a son of Abraham (19:9b), he is counted among the saved with Lazarus.

4. A New Perspective on the Zacchaeus Episode

Zacchaeus is an ambiguous character, whose name suggests probity, but whose occupation and wealth raise questions for Luke's readers. His short stature, his running, his furtive approach, and especially his climbing and descending of the tree all complicate the portrayal. Interpreters are split regarding the Zacchaeus story as to whether it is a story of conversion or of vindication, with the focus falling heavily on Zacchaeus' speech (19:8). Many view the present tense as having a future aspect and view the episode as a conversion. Others understand an iterative aspect to the present tense and view the episode as a vindication of Zacchaeus.[55] Interpreters who opt for conversion tend to emphasise the negative possibilities of the various ambiguous traits staining Zacchaeus' character, in order to then highlight

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the minor characters (Tabitha [Acts 9:36–42]; Eutychus [Acts 20:7–12]; the lame [Acts 3:1–4:31; 9:32–35; 14:8–11]; Cornelius' conversion [Acts 10:1–48]).

53 T. Jantsch, "Salvation and the Fate of Jesus in Luke-Acts," *Sōtēria*: *Salvation in Early Christianity and Antiquity. Festschrift in Honour of C. Breytenbach on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (eds. D. du Toit – C. Gerber – C. Zimmermann) (Leiden: Brill 2019) 212–216, esp. 215.

54 Troftgruben exposits the rhetorical impact of such open endings. See "Unanswered Invitations," 12.

55 For the two sides of the debate see F. Bovon, *L'évangile selon St Luc* (CNT IIIc; Genève: Labor et fides 2001) 234, 242; Broccardo, "È andato ad alloggiare da un peccatore," 153–170.

the transformation, whereas conversely, more benevolent possibilities are apt to be chosen by those who read the episode as Zacchaeus' vindication.

Among the many elements of the episode, the movements of Zacchaeus have been overlooked. Luke's narrative economy urges readers to explore the reasons for such detailed attention to the movements and the tree. If the climbing and coming down from the tree at Jesus' instigation are viewed as Zacchaeus' participation in Jesus' paschal mystery, then something more than conversion is at stake, namely the salvific power of Jesus, as is so strongly emphasised in Jesus' final response to Zacchaeus (19:9–10). This saving power derives from the death and resurrection, symbolised by the upward and downward movements on the tree. The mimetic participation of Zacchaeus in the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection results in his transformation and new life.

Zacchaeus' first response was to act upon what he heard about Jesus and run ahead and climb the tree. His second response was to act upon Jesus' direct command to him: he comes down from the tree. The transformation occurs in contact with Jesus' word, at first indirectly and then directly. The effect of the transformation is visible on his descent. After coming down, he welcomes (ὑποδέχομαι) Jesus joyfully into his home (19:6), which is paradoxically confirmed by the grumbling of the crowd that Jesus has gone to stay (καταλύω) with a sinner (19:7). It is striking that Zacchaeus is reported to be σταθείς (standing) when he addresses Jesus, here designated as Lord (19:8). The participle derived from ἵστημι evokes ἀνίστημι, the most common verb used for the resurrection in Luke (8:55; 9:8, 19; 16:31; 18:33; 24:7, 46; Acts 2:24, 32; 9:40, 41; 10:41; 13:33, 34; 17:3, 31) and the related noun ἀνάστασις indicating the resurrection (14:14; 20:27, 33, 35, 36; Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33; 17:18, 32; 23:6, 8). With this participle, Zacchaeus is shown to adopt the posture of one who has risen. In the preceding episode of the healing of the blind man, this participle indicates Jesus' posture when he stops on the road and summons the man (18:40).

Zacchaeus' participation in the mystery of the death and resurrection is Christological. To the disciples' amazement, when Jesus spoke of the difficulty of the rich accessing the kingdom of God, Jesus replied 'what is impossible for humans, is possible for God' (18:27). The rich toll collector now exemplifies one such person who overcomes this human impossibility through his participation in the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. Zacchaeus, as a son of Abraham (19:9b), resembles no longer the rich man of the parable, but Lazarus (16:19–31). The later meal in the home of Zacchaeus is a celebration of the new life and salvation that Jesus brings, as he did earlier for Levi (5:29–32). The verb 'stay' (μένω [19:5]) is used again when the risen Jesus is invited to stay at Emmaus (24:29). This paschal setting is further suggested by the narrator choosing to refer to Jesus as κύριος (19:8a) and by the change in Zacchaeus' perception, from one who first sought to seek Jesus (19:3) but who now addresses him as κύριε (19:8b).

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