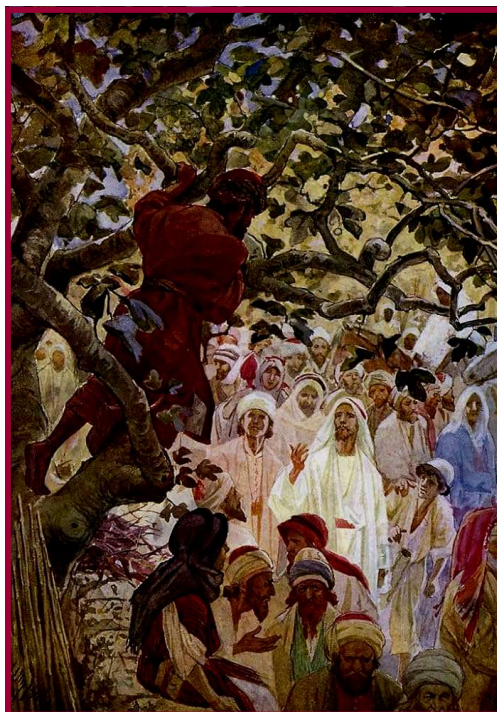


Zacchaeus and the Sycamore-Fig Tree in Luke 19:1-10

- Some Possible Typological and Intertextual Connections and a Proposed Structural Analysis



**Jesus Summoning Zacchaeus the Publican to Entertain Him at His House
by William Brassey Hole (1846-1917)**



Introduction—What Kind of Tree?

In this article, I would like to suggest that the well-known and well-loved account of Jesus and Zacchaeus at Jericho recorded in Luke 19:1-10 has some interesting connections to other parts of the bible—both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The article is based on the possibility that the tree that Zacchaeus might have climbed was actually a type of fig tree. There are many interesting and helpful discussions of this passage in the commentaries, but they do not, in general, discuss this possible “fig tree” aspect, though I welcome correction here!

Thus, before we start, I think it would be helpful to clarify the type of tree that Zacchaeus climbed. Luke has recorded the type of tree in his account, so we can reasonably assume it is significant. Many translations translate the Greek word *sukomorea* as a sycamore tree. Others, particularly some more recent translations, describe the tree as a sycamore-fig tree. (The Greek word for fig is *sukon*). It appears that the tree was actually a type of fig tree belonging to the mulberry family and thus related to the common, or cultivated, fig tree the *sukea*. The sycamore-fig produced figs of poorer quality than the *sukea* fig tree. Amos is described in Amos 7:14 as a “dresser of sycamore-figs” and the Greek word used in the Septuagint translation of this verse is *sukaminos*—an alternative name for the *sukomorea*. William Tyndale, in his 1534 (revised) New Testament translation, describes the tree in the

Zacchaeus account as a “wilde fygge tree” - which, I suggest, is accurate!

So the rich man Zacchaeus climbs the “poor man’s” fig tree!

An interesting “fig” aspect of the Zacchaeus passage is that towards the end of the passage, in Luke 19:8, Zacchaeus says that if he has defrauded anyone (by false accusation) he will restore it fourfold. Now the word for defraud here is *sukophanteo* the word from which we get “sycophant”. The word has changed its meaning as it originally meant to defraud someone by making a false accusation. Literally, the Greek word means to “make known figs”! Apparently it originated in the practice of (falsely) accusing someone of illegally exporting figs from Greece. If our understanding of the passage is basically correct, then we have the amusing irony of Zacchaeus, the one who makes known or reveals figs, himself being made known or revealed *as* a fig by Jesus when He brought Zacchaeus down from the tree! Perhaps the joke or pun was even intended by Zacchaeus when he used this very word in making his declaration to Jesus, and, if so, that might well have added to the joyous atmosphere of the occasion!

But there is, I suggest, much more significance to the fact that this is a type of fig tree, given the massive importance of fig trees in Scripture. I hope to explore a little of this possible significance later in this article.

The Location—Jericho

Luke records the type of tree, but he also records the location—Jericho. Jericho is mentioned quite often in Scripture. In the Scriptural accounts, the first person recorded as being saved in Jericho is Rahab, the harlot, and here, in Luke, the last person recorded as having been saved in Jericho is Zacchaeus, a chief publican/tax collector. This is in line with Jesus’ words to the chief priests and elders in the temple in Matt. 21:31, “Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you”. The Commander of the Army of the Lord at the start of the conquest of Jericho (Josh. 5:13-15) is understood to be a Pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Himself—another link between these two events.

This contrast between Jericho and Jerusalem/the Temple is also shown in the contrast between the rich man Zacchaeus and the rich men putting their gifts into the offerings box in the Temple (Luke 21:1-4). In both accounts, Jesus is described as “looking up” (*anablepo*).

Jericho, the lowest city on earth, also contrasts with the elevated location of Jerusalem.

A further link between Jericho and Jerusalem is found in Revelation (at least in the Partial Preterist interpretation of Revelation where the Babylon of Revelation is interpreted as Jerusalem, including the Jerusalem religious leaders etc.) There are many connections between the Fall of Jericho in Joshua and the Fall of Babylon and associated events in Revelation. (These connections are excellently described by the American Presbyterian scholar Warren Gage in his John-Revelation Project Study Paper No. 1, although he identifies Babylon in a rather more “nuanced” way than in the “standard” Partial Preterist view.)

Another contrast concerns fig trees in Jericho and Jerusalem. Please see below!

Jesus and Fig Trees in the Gospels, Especially Luke

Luke's Gospel has a number of references to fig trees. The fig tree, the olive tree and the vine represent Israel, and figs, in particular, represent the sort of faith, obedience and good behaviour that Israel should exhibit (e.g. Jeremiah Ch. 24)

Let us look at these references:

In Luke 6:43-45 Jesus says that “figs are not gathered from thorn bushes” in relation to the good things produced by good people and vice versa.

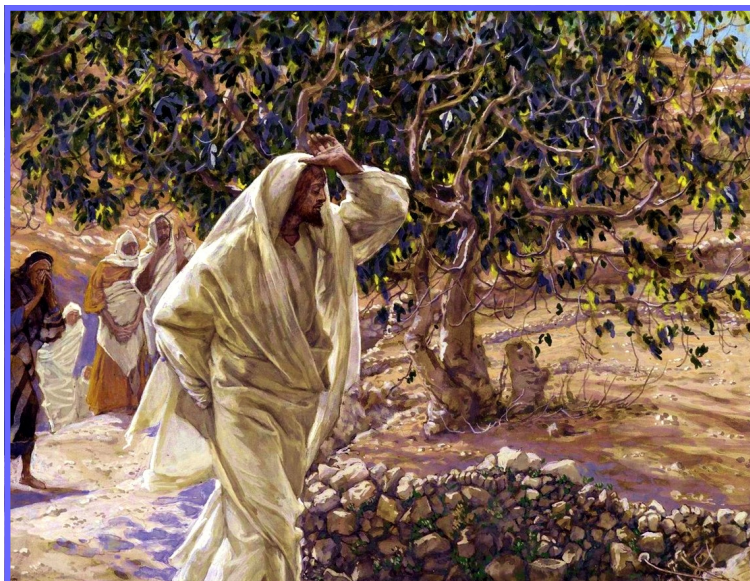
In Luke 13:6-9 Jesus tells the parable of the barren fig tree in a man's vineyard which is given one further chance to bear fruit otherwise it will be chopped down. This is recognised as a warning to Israel to repent now and bring forth the fruits of repentance.

In Luke 17:5-6, in a discussion about faith, Jesus speaks of a mulberry tree being uprooted and cast into the sea. The tree here may actually be another type of fig tree, the fig-mulberry. (This appears to be similar to the type of tree that Zacchaeus climbed—again, producing fruit that is inferior to that of the common fig tree) (The difference in Greek is *sukaminos* vs. *sukomorea*.) If this is an inferior type of fig tree, this could be a reference to judgement on Israel— Israel being cast into the sea where the sea represents the Gentile world (amongst other things) in Biblical typology.

This reference is analogous to Jesus' words in e.g. Mark 11:23 about “this mountain”. A number of commentators (though not R. T. France) argue that, in context, this would be the Temple Mount, and that the passage thus speaks of judgement on Jerusalem/Israel, and the nation's dispersal amongst the Gentiles (Deut. 28:64; Luke 21:24; also Rev. 18:21-24.) (We note the “fig tree” connection here in Mark Ch. 11 too—to be discussed later!)

In Luke 21:29 Jesus uses the fig tree as an illustration of the signs surrounding the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple which took place in A. D. 70. Please see also Matt. 24:32-35 and Mark 13:28-31.

The theme of judgement on Israel, centred on Jerusalem and the Temple itself, is clearly



The Accursed
Fig Tree.

James Tissot

related to fig trees in the account of the fig tree that withers in Matt. 21:18-22 and Mark 11:12-25. In the Markan account, the fig tree narrative is intercalated with the cleansing of the Temple (perhaps more accurately, an acted prophecy of *judgement* on the Temple (c.f. Jer. 7:1-14)), thus linking the withering of the fig tree with the forthcoming judgement. The fig tree had leaves, but no fruit—in keeping with Luke 21:29 discussed in the previous paragraph.

With all of this in the background, we are now in a position to suggest that Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus might be interpreted as Jesus' search for "fruit" in a sycamore-fig tree! Unlike the situation of the withering fig tree in the environs of Jerusalem (above), Jesus does indeed find "fruit"(!) in this particular fig tree, and it turns out to be the right kind of fruit—fruit which welcomes Jesus, shows repentance and which exhibits good works! Jericho's "poor man's" fig tree thus contrasts favourably with Jerusalem's fig tree—a "proper" cultivated fig tree but one that bears no fruit.

How Did Jesus Know to Look Up?

The commentaries usually discuss how Jesus knew to look up in the sycamore-fig tree, how He knew Zacchaeus' name and also how He knew the disposition, or latent disposition, of Zacchaeus' heart. Some commentaries claim that Jesus overheard Zacchaeus' name or asked someone etc. By contrast, John Gill's comments on this (please see e.g. the Bible Hub website on Luke 19:5) are excellent. For example:

"Christ knows where his people are, and where to find them, where they commonly dwell, or where at any time they are, he being God omniscient" .

and

"He looked up and saw him; he knew him, he being one of those the Father had given to him, and he had loved and undertook for, and was come into the world to seek, and to save, and now, at this time, was come hither to call by his grace. He had seen him before in the glass of his Father's purposes and decrees, he being chosen in him to grace and glory, and being a vessel of mercy, afore prepared for glory".

Also in John 10:3 we read that "He calls His own sheep by name". Jesus also knew, by preternatural sight, details about another Israelite, Nathaniel, (and a fig tree!) (John 1:47-51). The name Zacchaeus is from the Hebrew *zakah* means to be clean, pure or innocent. Thus, Jesus addresses Zacchaeus, in the vocative case, as *Zakchaie* - literally as "O Pure One". This sets the scene for what follows, and is a remarkable instance of the expression *nomen est omen*!

The Greek Word *Anablepo*

In Luke 19:5, Jesus looks up and then sees, and speaks to, Zacchaeus. Please note that the Received Text thus has two "seeing words" at this point—Jesus both "looks up" and "sees". (Unfortunately, eclectic texts, such as NA27 and therefore many "modern" translations, omit the second of these references.) The word for "looks up" comes from the Greek verb *anablepo* which literally means to "see up". The preposition *ana* means "up", but used as a prefix (as here) it can also mean "again". (There are also some other meanings which we are not considering here). Thus, in the miracle of the restoring of sight to Bartimaeus (which immediately precedes the "Zacchaeus" event in Luke), the verb *anablepo* is used

and, in context, appears to mean “to see again” or “to restore sight”. However, in the case of the healing of the man who was born blind in John Ch. 9, the verb *anablepo* is also used (e.g. John 9:11). Here the verb means to “gain sight”, rather than to “regain sight”, (so it could have this meaning here in the case of Bartimaeus). Interestingly, in the parallel account regarding Bartimaeus in Matthew, Bartimaeus’ healing is described both in terms of his eyes being opened, and as his seeing again, (using *anablepo*). We note that in Gen. Ch. 3, the expression “the eyes being opened” is used in a “spiritual” rather than physical sense), whereas in Luke’s account, Bartimaeus asks for his “sight to be restored” using the Greek verb *anablepo*, and as noted above this verb can also mean “to gain sight”. These terms then, in some contexts anyway, appear to equivalent. This raises the interesting question as to whether Jesus’ “looking up” (*anablepo*) in v. 5 might also have the meaning of His “gaining sight” or his “eyes being opened” in the sense of a supernatural “knowing to look up” to where Zacchaeus was. We might compare this with Jesus’ knowing that “virtue or strength had gone out of Him” in the case of the Woman with the issue of blood - though here the sense of touch rather than of sight was supernaturally involved)

The Bartimaeus event and the Zacchaeus event form a pair in Luke. This is an interesting topic as the two events have a number of connections—e.g. both involve “seeing” by these two men. The Bartimaeus event contrasts with the immediately preceding lack of understanding of the Disciples, and before that Luke records Jesus’ encounter with the rich young ruler, and before that there is the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector—both of which have connections with the Zacchaeus event, as does the Parable of the Ten Minas which immediately follows. However, I will not attempt to discuss these interesting connections here—but please see the helpful observations in the commentaries.

Is There a Connection With Genesis Ch. 3?

I would like now to suggest that the Zacchaeus event *may* also have a sort of “inverse” connection with the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. I realise that this is somewhat(!) speculative, and welcome in advance all comments and corrections. It is nevertheless true that both events involve trees and seeing and both deal with fellowship with God: Adam and Eve lose fellowship with God (albeit modified with i) God’s gracious provision and promise for an (ultimate) full restoration, and ii) Adam’s indication of trust in God e.g. through the naming of his wife) but Zacchaeus gains salvation and comes into fellowship with God through Christ. Finally, both passages involve eating or hospitality.

I would like to suggest, (very cautiously!), that there are two ways in which the two events, may be seen in parallel, or perhaps more accurately, in “inverse” (or “inverted”) parallelism. If this idea is correct, this would be in line with the parallelism/inverse parallelism between Adam, the type, and Christ, the anti-type, which Paul develops in Romans Ch. 5: Adam and Christ are both federal heads of those who are in Adam and in Christ respectively, (parallelism), but in Adam, all die, but in Christ all are made alive—so in this respect we have inverse parallelism in relation to life and death.

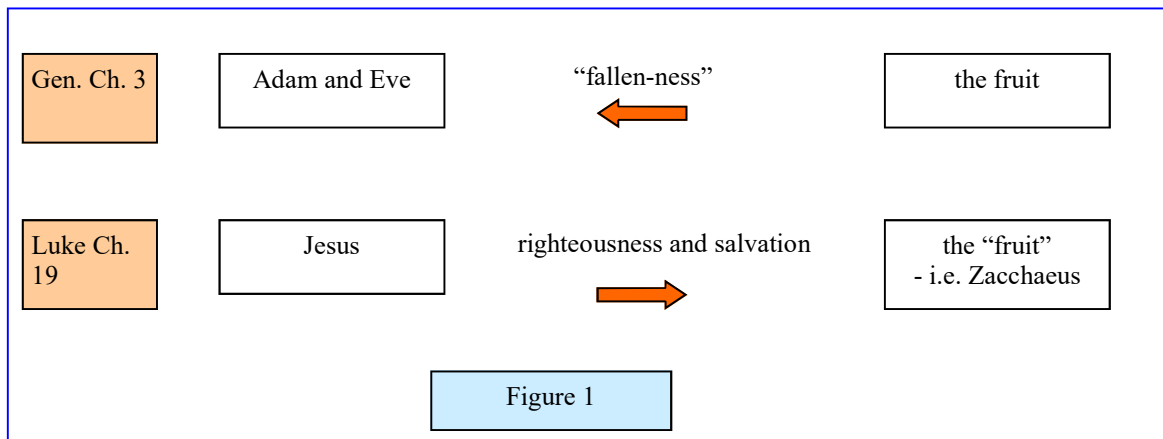
In the first proposed parallelism, Jesus corresponds to Adam and Eve, but does so in ways that include both similarity and contrast.

In the second proposed parallelism, Jesus acts in ways that correspond to God’s acts in Genesis Ch. 3—again incorporating both similarity and contrast.

Let us look at both of these in turn:

1st Possible Connection

In the first proposed connection, the fruit transmits fallen-ness to Adam and Eve, but Jesus transmits holiness and salvation to the “fruit” (i.e. Zacchaeus!) Thus there is a contrast in the “direction of travel” , as well as in what is actually transmitted. Please see Figure 1 below:



Notes on Figure 1

Thus verses 5 and 6 do “double duty”: they, along with verses 3 and 4, are part of a parallelism/inverted parallelism between Jesus and Zacchaeus (“seeing” and ascending/descending the sycamore tree etc.) but they also form the first part of our proposed parallelism/inverted parallelism between Jesus and Adam/Eve, which is discussed below:

Eve sees the tree is good for food etc. and so she takes the fruit down from the tree and she and Adam eat the fruit thereby becoming “one” with it (i.e. through eating) and their eyes are opened. They become “one” with the fruit since the fruit comes from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and they have now acquired this knowledge. It is acquired through disobedience, and results in the Fall.

Jesus sees Zacchaeus, the “fruit” in the tree, and brings him down from the tree. Jesus becomes “one” with Zacchaeus through shared hospitality which itself is a result of Zacchaeus’ obedience to Jesus command, and results in Zacchaeus’ restoration.

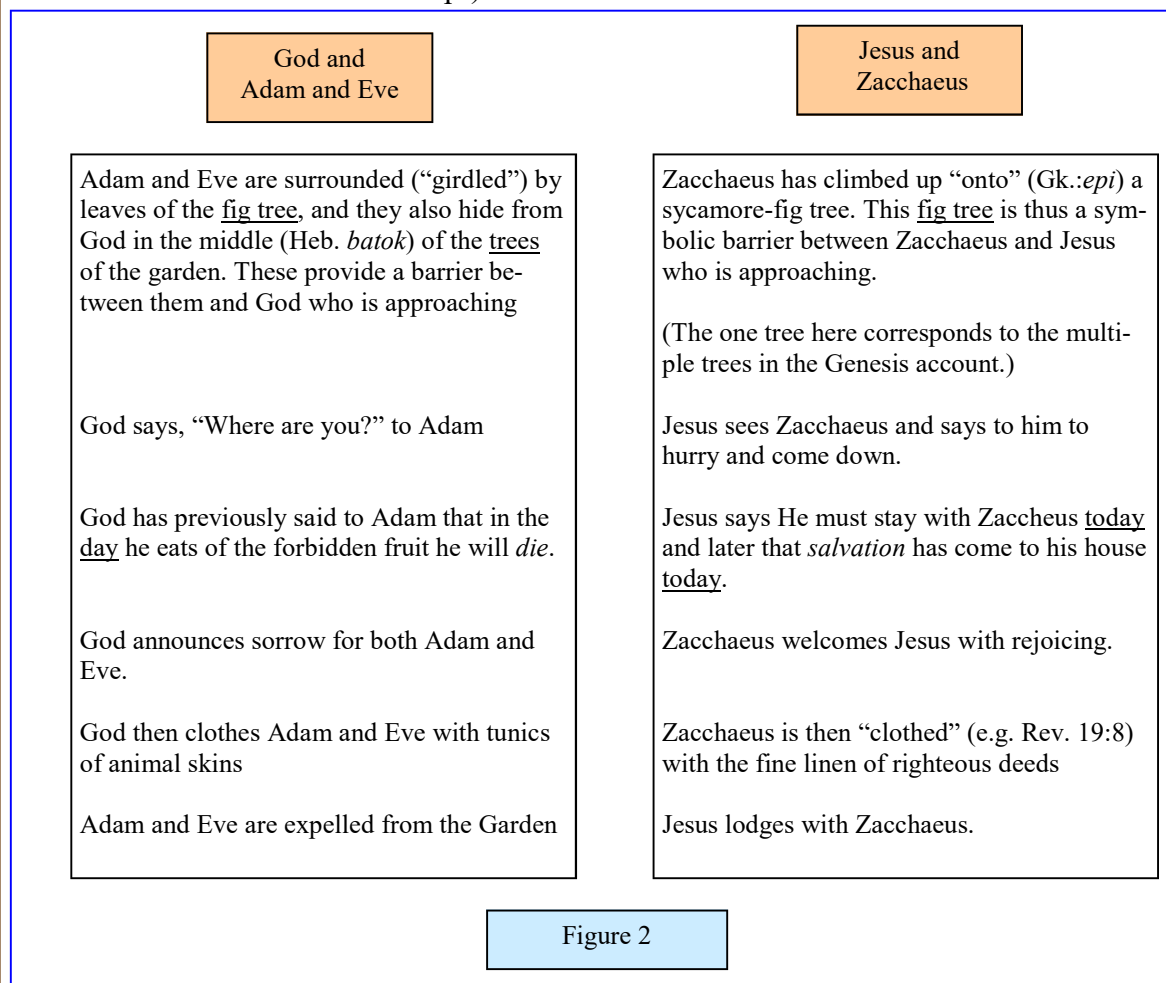
Righteousness thus comes to Zacchaeus, the “fruit”, through his union, through obedience, with Jesus, but “fallenness” comes to Adam and Eve through their union, through disobedience, with the fruit.

Another possible connection here is that the “knowledge of good and evil” in Scripture refers to the making of righteous judgements. It is a kingly quality. (This is discussed quite extensively in James Jordan’s book, *Trees and Thorns*.) Perhaps we are to understand that Adam and Eve, in their fallen state, now had this knowledge, but not the ability or righteousness to act on it. (Paul said something similar in Romans Ch. 7 (e.g. Rom. 7:18b: “For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out”. Paul’s teaching in Ro-

mans Ch. 7 is often related to the situation in Gen. Ch. 3 in commentaries and articles.) By contrast, through contact/union with Jesus, Zaccheus exemplifies righteous judgement with regard to his possessions!

2nd Possible Connection

As already noted, in this second possible connection, it is proposed that Jesus and Zacchaeus in Luke Ch. 19 correspond to God and Adam/Eve respectively in Genesis Ch. 3. The Adam and Eve situation here is that of the immediate aftermath of the Fall, and the proposed connections with Zacchaeus are illustrated in Figure 2. (I expect I've missed lots of additional connections! Please help!)



Notes on Figure 2

1) Most translations say that Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together. A more correct translation (in my view) would be that they sewed leaves from the fig tree together. The word fig here actually, I think, refers to a fig tree, and this is recognised by a couple of the *literal* translations of Gen. 3:7 at the Bible Hub website.

Structural Analysis of the Zaccheus Account in Luke 19:1-10

One way of analysing the structure of the passage sees the central "pivot" as the transition

from Zacchaeus trying to see Jesus and Jesus actually seeing Zacchaeus.. Thus it is Zacchaeus, not Jesus, who initially does the “seeing” (or attempting to). Thus, in verses 3 and 4 he seeks (*zeteo*) to see Jesus Who He is, and so climbs up the tree in order to see Jesus. (In climbing the tree he thus becomes, as it were, the “fruit” in the tree.)

However, the scene having been set in this way, in the next verses, i.e. verses 5 and 6, the action is reversed! It is Jesus who does the seeing, and Zacchaeus who is seen and it is Jesus who, as a result, reverses Zacchaeus’ movement up into the tree by bringing him back down from the tree. The action is also “improved on” since we are only told of Zachaeus’ *intention* to see, but Jesus *actually* sees. Also we can note that the object of Zacchaeus’ intention is *explicitly* stated: it is not just to see Jesus, but to see Jesus, “Who He is”. It appears that Zacchaeus wished, in seeing, to perceive something more about Jesus than what was “immediately apparent to a casual observer”. These two aspects of Zacchaeus’ “seeing” perhaps then correspond to the two meanings of Jesus’ “seeing” - i) the physical act of looking (up) which I suggested above includes the “deeper” meaning of gaining sight, or insight (*anablepo*) and ii) the physical “seeing” of Zaccheus by Jesus . A difference is that Jesus “seeing” twice is explicit whereas Zacchaeus’ “double seeing” has to be inferred. Nevertheless, there are two “seeing” verbs for Zacchaeus also (in verses 3 and 4).

The reversal discussed in the above paragraphs forms (I suggest) the thematic centre of the “Zacchaeus” passage. I have attempted a structural analysis of the whole passage in Figure 2 (below) which is very similar to Kenneth Bailey’s analysis of the passage in his book, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*.

[Please note: I am here, as always, using the Received Text. Unfortunately, Nestle-Aland and other “eclectic” texts omit the second “seeing” by Jesus in v. 5, and so miss this aspect of the parallelism discussed above.]

The following proposed analysis attempts to see a large-scale chiasm, together with a conclusion, in the passage considered as a whole, and also to see two “component” chiasms or “sub-chiasms” in the upper and lower halves of this larger structure.

In the Received Text, the passage consists of 150 words, of which the final 30 words are, in the present analysis, being treated as the conclusion. The large chiasm “proper” then is seen as consisting of 120 words. The four (in Greek!) middle words are, “(the) Jesus saw him” - clearly a very significant point in the narrative!

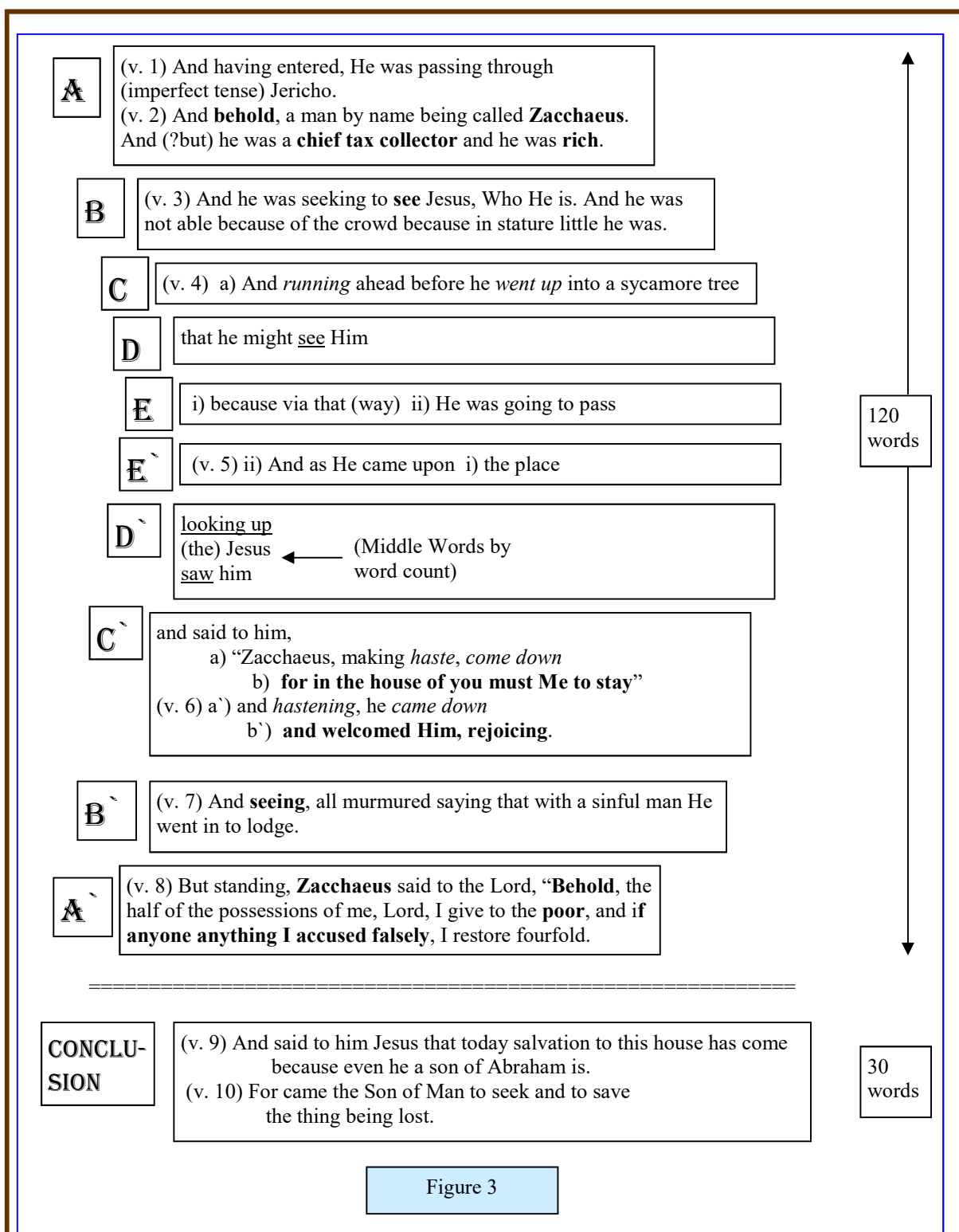
The Large Chiasm

The large chiasm is shown in Figure 3 on the next page.

Notes on Figure 3

1) The top half of the chiasm describes Zacchaeus’ attempt to see Jesus, but Jesus and Zacchaeus are separate from each other. The lower half describes what happens when Jesus and Zacchaeus are brought together, starting with Jesus’ arrival at the place where Zacchaeus is. The “transition” occurs at E and E’ in this analysis. We will note that there is a “doubling” effect from this point on (which I attempt to explain in what follows!)

2) A and A’. The seventh word in both A and A’ is *idou* - “Behold!” or “See!”. As already



noted, there is a lot of “seeing” in this passage! A introduces the narrative. It presents us with two people. The first is Jesus Who is in the process of passing through Jericho. The wording gives the impression that Jesus was not intending, at this point in time, to stop in Jericho. The second person is named Zacchaeus. A number of translations I suggest fail to note the emphasis placed on this name. He is not just called Zacchaeus or named Zacchaeus, he is “by name called Zacchaeus”. The name Zacchaeus means “the pure one”. So I tentatively suggest that we are perhaps expected to recognise a contrast in v. 2. (The Greek word *kai* usually just means “and” but it can also have the adversive, contrastive meaning

suggested here). If this is so, then v. 2 would read something like this: “Behold! A man by name called Zacchaeus, i.e. the pure one, but he was a *chief tax collector* and he was *rich*!!”

So, Jesus appears to be, as it were, just passing through Jericho. But behold! What is this?! - a very bad man with a very good name! Can Jesus cause the man to live up to his good name? The scene has been set in A, and in A' we see that, indeed, Zacchaeus is now truly living up to his good name!

In A, Zacchaeus is given a double description: he is a chief tax collector and he is rich. I suggest these correspond (chiastically) to Zacchaeus' two restorative actions in A': he gives to the poor and he makes restitution to those he has defrauded. Thus:

Verse 2:	a) chief tax collector
	b) rich
	=====
Verse 8:	b') poor
	a') those defrauded

2) B and B'. Curiously, it is Zacchaeus, and not Jesus, who is presented as initially driving the action forward! In this respect, this narrative development is similar to that of the woman with the issue of blood (e.g. Luke 8:43-48). Jesus appears only to know about her when she has made the first move by touching the hem of His garment. Perhaps in both instances we can recognise the mysterious prior moving and prompting of the Holy Spirit as the Father draws people to Jesus.

B and B' both involve the crowd impeding the “action”. In B, the crowd is preventing Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus, but Zacchaeus is resourceful and overcomes the problem! In B', the crowd is grumbling because Jesus is going to receive hospitality from Zacchaeus—a sinful man. Again, Zacchaeus overcomes the problem—this time by his proposed act of great generosity which will reverse his past sinful actions.

3) C and C'. C “reverses” C'! In C, Zacchaeus runs and climbs the sycamore-fig tree. In C', he hastens to come down. We note the “doubling” of the action: Jesus *tells* Zacchaeus to hasten and come down, and then Zacchaeus *does* both of these things. There is also an additional element in C' which is not present in C and that is the (doubled) invitation for Jesus to stay with Zacchaeus.

4) D and D'. Zacchaeus *sees* in D; Jesus *sees* (twice!) in D'. (That is, in the Received Text!!) We have discussed the possible significance of *anablepo*—the verb used for the first of Jesus' “seeings”.

5) E and E'. This is the thematic centre of the passage. In E, Zacchaeus knows that Jesus is going to pass that way, and in E', Jesus actually comes to that place. The two “protagonists” can now meet!

The Two Proposed Sub-Chiasms

The first (upper) sub-chiasm consists of verses 1 to 4. It is shown in Figure 3 on the next page.

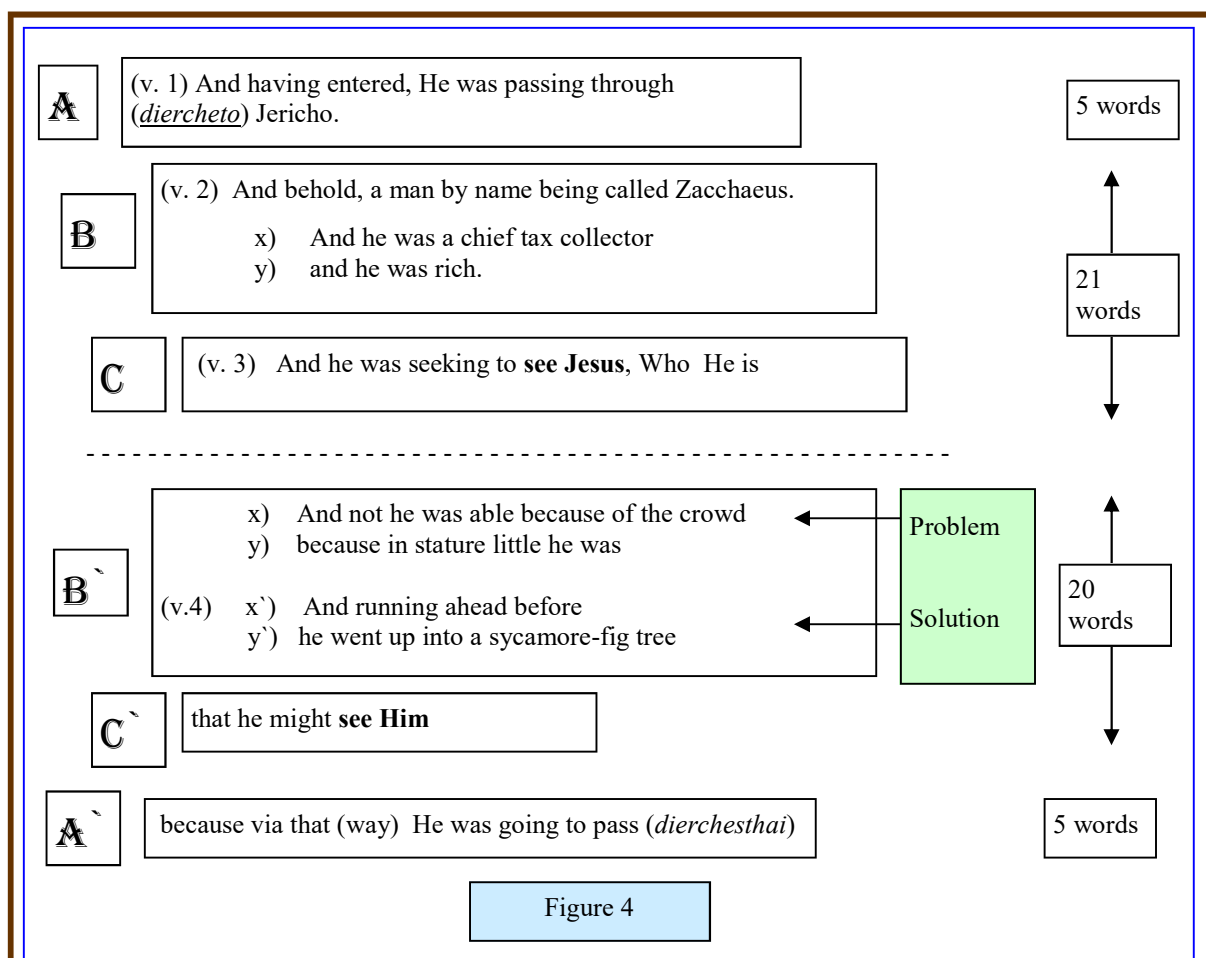


Figure 4

Notes on Figure 4

- 1) The verses have a (proposed) modified chiasmic structure: A - (B,C) // (B',C') - A'
- 2) A and A': Jesus is not specifically named in either A or A'. The verb *dierchomai*, to pass through, occurs in both A and A'. A and A' are both 5 words long.
- 3) [A brief note on B and C]: There is a subtle parallelism in B and C, (although this is not part of the proposed structure shown in Figure 4). This parallelism is given in Figure 5 below. In B, Zacchaeus is introduced, and in C, his quest to see who Jesus is is stated in a way

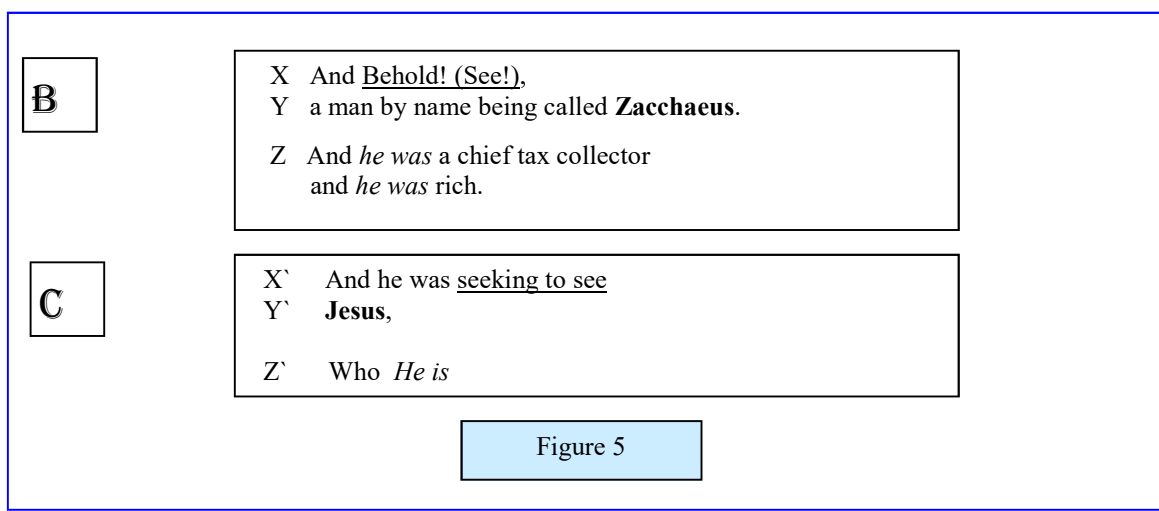


Figure 5

that parallels B. The structure seems to indicate that Zacchaeus' quest involves more than just physically seeing Jesus, but includes a comparison/contrast between himself and Jesus.

4) I have already noted the “double description” of Zacchaeus in B—chief tax collector and rich. I now want to suggest that the first of these, chief tax collector, is a “horizontal” aspect: it tells us something of how Zacchaeus relates to his fellow human beings. By contrast, I suggest that riches is a “vertical” aspect of Zacchaeus' life since in Scripture, we are told not to lay up treasures on *earth*, but rather, in *heaven* (Matt. 6:19-21) and that it is the poor in spirit who are blessed and who have the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3).

5) The (conceptual/symbolic) connection between B and B' then, I suggest relates to these horizontal and vertical aspects. Zacchaeus in B' is unable to see Jesus for both horizontal and vertical reasons: in B'(x) we are told that Zacchaeus is unable to see Jesus because of the crowd (the “horizontal” reason). The crowd is not making way for Zacchaeus, and we later discover that he is well-known to them, and he is not liked by them, and this appears to be linked to his job as a chief tax collector in B(x). The vertical reason is that Zacchaeus is a short man (B'(y)). Symbolically, he is thus further from heaven because of his earthly riches (i.e. B(y)).

[As another aside, we note that Zacchaeus is later called a son of Abraham. Interestingly, Luke also mentions a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had “bent together” for 18 years, and who is released by Jesus (Luke 13:10-17). Again, lack of height is associated with a spiritual malady, (albeit of a different kind.) Is this “Abraham” connection a (very!) cryptic example of Luke's well-known tendency (both in his Gospel and in Acts) to report events involving male-female pairs? (But note also, Acts 14:1-6)! “Surely He (Jesus) . . . helps the offspring of Abraham” (Heb. 2:16)!

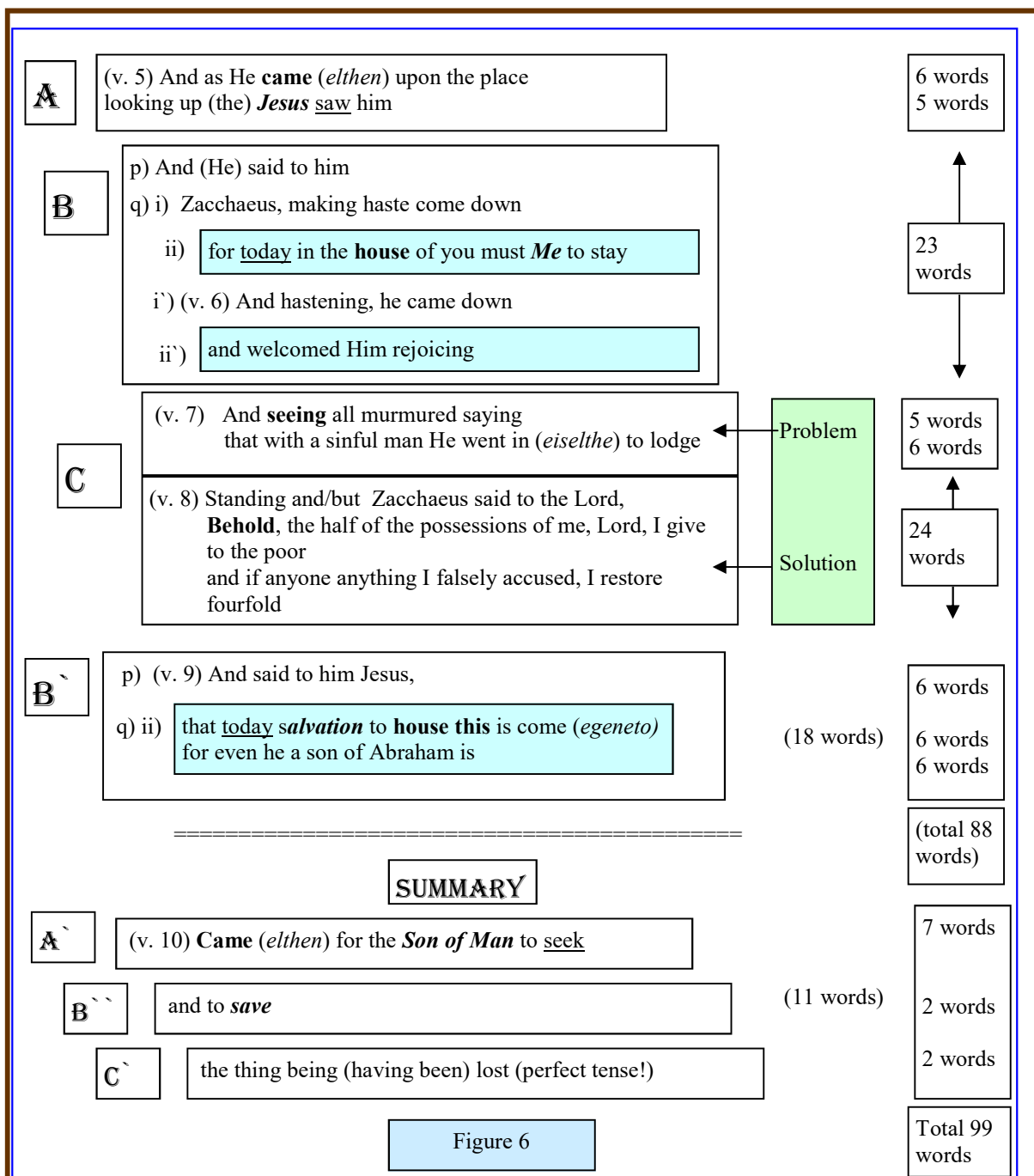
6) The two problems—the “horizontal” and the “vertical” created by the crowd and Zacchaeus' small stature in B'(x and y) are overcome by Zacchaeus in B'(x' and y')! he runs ahead (of the crowd) in B'(x') - thus solving the “horizontal” problem and he climbs the sycamore-fig tree in B'(y') - thus solving the “vertical” problem! Zacchaeus solves both of these problems in a very unconventional way, for in that culture, running and climbing trees was highly *infra dignitatem*! (Please see *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* by Kenneth Bailey for many such helpful insights!)

The lower sub-chiasm consists of the remainder of the passage (verses 5-10). It is illustrated in Figure 6 on the next page.

Notes on Figure 6

1) The “Summary” at the bottom of Figure 6 tells us of Jesus' mission to “seek and to save that which is lost”. This links our passage with the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7). (Is the fact that our chiasm is 99 words long significant here?!) This parable refers us back to Ezekiel Ch. 34 (“God will seek out His scattered sheep”) The reference to the sheep as “the house of *Israel*” in Ezek. 34:30-31 perhaps links to Jesus' reference to Zacchaeus as a son of *Abraham*.

2) B and B': There is a parallelism between B and B'. In both, Jesus speaks to Zacchaeus. In both there is a reference to “today” and to Zacchaeus' “house”. In B, Jesus says that He must (Greek: *dei*) stay (remain) at Zacchaeus' house, and in B', Jesus gives, by way of ex-



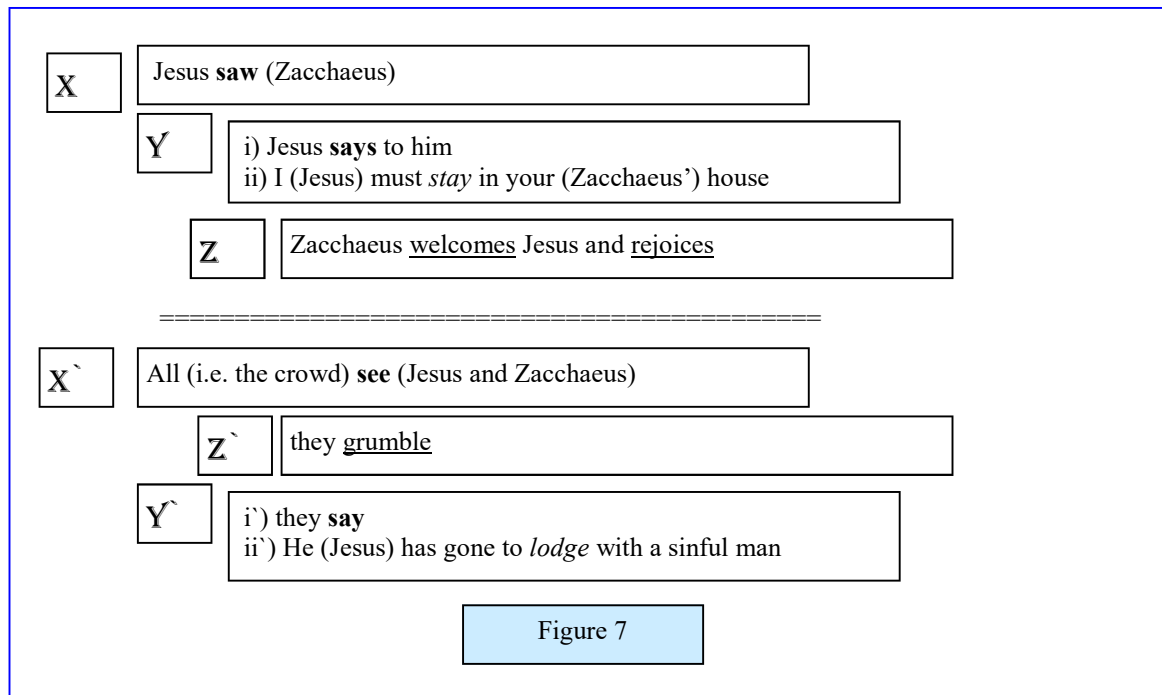
planation that, “even he is a son of Abraham”. (Dare I also note that B', the section dealing with Zacchaeus' Abrahamic sonship is 18 words long, and that the number 18 features, as noted earlier, in the account of the “daughter of Abraham” who was healed in Luke 13:10-17?!) Finally we note that the presence of Jesus in B is synonymous with salvation in B'!

3) In the first part of subsection C, the crowd presents a problem regarding Jesus' plan to stay at Zacchaeus' house: Zacchaeus is a sinful man. In the lower half, Zacchaeus resolves this problem. Zacchaeus comes across as resourceful and determined in this narrative, but the Summary (and the Conclusion to the “big” chiasm earlier) nevertheless present the decisive step in Zacchaeus' salvation as Christ's determination to save.

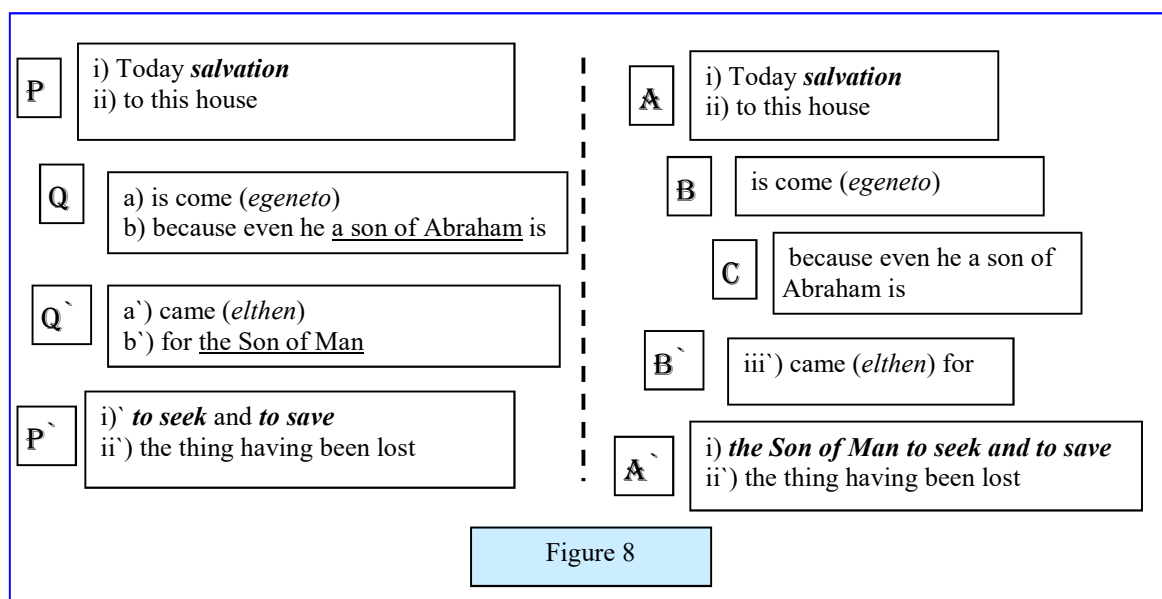
Actually, in our analysis, there are two chiastic structures. In the first of these, (A-B-C-B'-A'), Jesus' actions occur in A and A', and Zacchaeus' sin problem and its resolution are at

the centre, C. In the second, (C-B'-A'-B''-C'), this is reversed: Jesus' action is at the centre, A', and Zacchaeus' "lostness" and its solution are at the periphery (C and C').

4) We note that there is a little structure (in verses 5-7 (i.e. A, B and the upper part of C (which does not form part of the above analysis) It is shown in summary form in Figure 7 below, and it contrasts the crowd's attitude to Jesus and Zacchaeus (i.e. grumbling) to that of Jesus and Zacchaeus (i.e. being united and rejoicing).



5) I think there is a further little structure at the end of the passage (Figure 8). Two versions are given. In P' and in A' in Figure 8 we note that "the thing having been lost" needs both seeking and saving—"lost" here having a corresponding "double meaning"!



6) Interestingly, it could be reasoned from section C in Figure 6 that it was the dishonour

done to Jesus by the grumbling crowd that prompted Zacchaeus' generous restorative promise. The crowd has complained that Jesus has (scandalously) gone to lodge with a sinful man, with the inference that this behaviour discredits Jesus. It is not clear to me whether this reaction is out of envy (of Zacchaeus) or out of a genuinely held perception of "propriety" or out of the collective societal shame they are experiencing because of Jesus' action. Nevertheless, Zacchaeus seems to understand the crowd's words in an "honour-shame" context, and he acts to restore Jesus' honour by this dramatic display of generosity: his words negate the crowd's criticism of Jesus. Zaccheus does not seem concerned for his own honour, but for that of his Lord! Thus the passage is being interpreted here as an honour-shame challenge (perhaps even one actually "started" by Jesus?). Jesus has indeed sought out and saved that which was lost, but, in the providence of God, the crowd, intending evil, was used for good! ("You intended it for evil, but God intended it for good") and Zacchaeus has responded magnificently! There is a mystery here—God reaps where He has not sown! - just as God used the Fall of Adam to, ultimately, raise man, in Christ, to a higher state than that which he enjoyed in the pre-Fall creation.

Commentaries and other articles on this part of Luke's Gospel often (rightly!) describe Jesus' restoration of honour to Zacchaeus. However it seems to me that this "reverse" honour-shame aspect of Zacchaeus' motivation, as proposed in the previous paragraph, is not so often noted in the commentaries etc, but that it is rendered plausible by the structural analysis. (One of the differences between the crowd here and their earlier (ultimately positive) response to Jesus' calling for, and subsequently healing, the poor blind beggar Bartimaeus is, I tentatively suggest, that the honour-shame challenge to the community's honour posed by Bartimaeus' request to Jesus was resolved to everyone's satisfaction by Jesus' merciful action. Kenneth Bailey in *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* has some very insightful comments about the two events).

