

ZACCHAEUS AND THE TREE

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Luke 19: 3: *He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a Sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way*

Listening to the story of Zacchaeus I wondered does this belongs in the trio of other tree events, the more famous ones? Is Zacchaeus related to the serpent climbing the tree of knowledge, and also to Christ's crucifixion on the tree of the cross? All three 'climb the tree' and descend, the serpent to go on his belly his head bruised, Christ to bodily resurrection and ascension; Zacchaeus to salvation by the Son of man. Each one is related to sin and payment, the serpent's kind are condemned for ever to pay for his one sin, Zacchaeus himself pays for his own wrongs, Christ pays once and redeems mankind for all past and future sins. So I think that we can see Zacchaeus as representing a middle, or mediating story, as a man he is above the serpent, but below Christ. Then I looked up the sycamore tree and found that the one in the Bible is not the one indigenous to the UK, but refers to the *Ficus sycomorus* the Sycamore Fig, also known as the Tree of Life.

'In reality, the Sycamore of the Bible was the wild Fig tree, dedicated to fertility, joy, and the afterlife. The fig tree has a leaf very similar to that of a mulberry tree, and over the years the two Greek words for fig and mulberry (*sycos* and *moros*) united to form the name Sycamore. No "real" Sycamore was ever a tree of life'.

Mythical Plants of the Middle Ages is based on the writings of Ernst & Johanna Lehner and William A. Emboden. Information provided by: <http://www.godecookery.com>

Then I found that 'Sycamore trees were planted on the sides of roads to provide shade and some were planted along the road that Jesus took. ' I found this information about the tree and the picture of one on:

<http://home.planters.net/~thegivans/sycomore.html>

