

Four Men Up in a Tree

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

A. Firefighters came to the rescue of a New Jersey man who became stuck in a tree while trying to reach his pet bird. Dave Lovell, of Cherry Hill, said his scarlet macaw had fled the coop late on Thursday night. Lovell spent the next 20 hours trying to find his pet, who goes by the name of Sinbad. The screeching bird was finally located by Lovell at about 6:10 p.m. on Friday at the top of a tree just off Woodland Avenue a block away. Neighbors called 911 after Lovell had climbed the tree with the help of a 20-foot ladder and got to his feathered friend. But he couldn't climb back down. Firefighters had to cut dozens of branches to get their ladder and rescue bucket close to Lovell. While neighbors and Lovell's wife, Sandy, looked on, Lovell and Sinbad were pulled into the bucket at 7:30. Thank heavens," said Sandy. "My heart is pounding right now." Lovell, who had been bitten by Sinbad during the ordeal, was bleeding as he came off the fire truck. "Now that my feet are on the ground, I'm feeling OK," he said. He refused medical treatment. "I love my animals," Lovell said, after being asked why he would risk his life. "I've had Sinbad more than seven years, ever since he was hatched, and I would do it again."

B. Four men who ended up in a tree because of the choices they made.

I. 2Sam. 18:9-15 - ABSALOM: REAPING WHAT HE SOWED

A. He squandered his blessings; God had smiled on his life.

1. 2Sam. 18:33, 14:25-26

B. He squandered his privileges

1. He was the third son of David and Maacah, daughter of King Geshur, he was a royal descendent twice over, and probable heir to the throne.

C. He squandered his birthright

1. Wasted potential among disciples - 1Tim. 1:19-20

II. Matt. 27:3-5 - JUDAS: REJECTING THE SON OF GOD FOREVER

A. He rejected the call of the Lord

1. Judas was there when Jesus said "Come" - Matt. 11:28.

2. He was there when Jesus raised Lazarus - John 11:43-44.

3. He was there when Jesus walked on the water - Matt. 14:25.

4. In spite of this, he dismissed the Lord's call

B. He rejected the command of the Lord

1. Jesus' words had been preached around Judas for three years

2. John 3:16, 6:47, 5:24 - And Judas said no.

3. There can be no salvation apart from Jesus - Acts 4:12; John 14:6

C. He rejected the Christ

1. When Judas sold out Jesus, he was closing the door on his own soul

2. He hoped to profit by money, but without Christ, he had nothing
a. Matt. 26:15; Mark 8:36-37

3. When a sinner dismisses the Gospel, he isn't rejecting the messenger or merely the message, but the Christ of the message

III. Luke 19:1-10 - ZACCHAEUS: RECEIVING THE SAVIOR

- A. He had a desire to see Christ; when one searches for the Lord, he finds Him
 - 1. John 1:9; Matt. 7:7-8; Acts 17:27; Prov. 8:17; Jer. 29:12-13
- B. He had a definitive call from the Christ - John 6:44-45
- C. He had a drastically changed life
 - 1. 2Cor. 5:17; Ez. 36:26; John 3:3

IV. Gal. 3:13 - JESUS CHRIST: REDEEMING OUR SOULS

- A. Deut. 21:23; 2Cor. 5:21

Conclusions:

- A. All four ended up in a tree because of their own choices
 - 1. Absalom chose rebellion against his father, and he died a lingering, shameful death brought about by apparent random events
 - 2. Judas chose betrayal against the Christ and died a shameful, ugly death at his own hands
 - 3. Zacchaeus started out in a tree because he was seeking the Lord and died a happy, glorious death to sin
 - 4. Jesus ended up on a tree to die a painful, shameful death so that we could live forever.
- B. What do you choose?