



Unit 17, Session 4

Zechariah the Prophet

Zechariah

Story Point: Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

Open your Bible and read aloud from Zechariah, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

When God's people stopped rebuilding God's temple, God sent prophets to give His people a message. Zechariah was one of the prophets who told the people what God said.

This was God's message: "Return to Me, and I will return to you." God reminded the people about their ancestors. "The prophets told them to stop sinning, but they did not listen." So God had punished the people for their sin. "Don't be like them," God said.

One night, God gave Zechariah some messages through visions. Zechariah saw eight visions; each was a different message from God about something that was going to happen. In the first vision, Zechariah saw a man riding on a red horse. Behind him were other horses. They had been patrolling the earth. Soon the Lord would punish His enemies. The Lord's house would be rebuilt, and His cities would be blessed again.

In the second vision, Zechariah saw four horns—these stood for Israel's enemies. Zechariah also saw four craftsmen, who would defeat those enemies. Next, Zechariah saw a man going out to measure Jerusalem, but the city could not be measured because it was too big for walls. Instead, the Lord would be a wall of fire around it.

In the fifth vision, Zechariah saw a solid gold lampstand, which showed how all the Lord's plans would happen because of His Spirit. Then Zechariah saw a flying scroll, which was a curse on everyone who disobeyed God. In the seventh vision, a woman sat inside a basket. She represented the wickedness of those who worshiped false gods. She was lifted up and taken back to Babylon. In the eighth vision, Zechariah saw four chariots. They would patrol the earth.

God told Zechariah to collect silver and gold to make crowns. He said, "Place them on the head of Joshua, the high priest." Joshua's crowns meant that a special king was coming to bring peace for everyone. "Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey," Zechariah said. God promised to bless His people and punish the rest of the nations for their sin. One day everyone will worship the Lord.

Christ Connection: God was going to help His people and give them a different kind of king. Jesus is the King who came and rode humbly on a donkey, just as Zechariah said. Because Zechariah's prophecy came true in Jesus, we can have hope and forgiveness of sins when we trust in Jesus.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to think of someone they'd like to come visit them at home.

OPTION 1: Categories game

Supplies: paper, pens, stopwatch or timer

Form small groups of kids and give each group a piece of paper and a pen. Invite kids to play a category game. Call out a category (food, animals, states, and so on). Challenge kids to list as many items from the category as they can in 30 seconds. Play several rounds. The final category should be “things that will happen in the future.”

- Which category was hardest? Do you know what will happen in the future? Why or why not?

OPTION 2: Vision matching

Supplies: index cards, marker, scissors

Before the session, cut index cards in half to create smaller cards. Write the following phrases on eight cards: *horsemen, four horns and craftsmen, surveyor, high priest and branch, gold lampstand, flying scroll, woman in a basket, four chariots*. Then write them on eight more cards to make matching pairs. Prepare a set of 16 cards for every group of four to six kids.

Form groups of four to six kids and distribute the cards. Instruct kids to mix up the cards and place them facedown in a grid. Kids can play a matching game, turning over two cards at a time to look for matches. If cards match, keep them. If they don't match, turn them facedown.

- Do you think you would understand a vision containing these items? What is the strangest dream you've ever had?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today we are going to hear about the prophet Zechariah. God sent Zechariah and Haggai to encourage God's people as they rebuilt the temple. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from the Book of Zechariah.

- What does this story teach us about God?

Zechariah was faithful to tell God's people that **God was going to help** them and send them a King forever. Jesus was coming, and He is the perfect King and prophet.

- How many visions did Zechariah see? What did they mean?

Zechariah saw eight visions. The horsemen meant the Lord would punish His enemies, the Lord's house would be rebuilt, and His cities would be blessed again. The four horns and craftsmen meant Israel's enemies would be defeated. The man with a measuring tape meant God would be a wall of protection around Jerusalem. Joshua the high priest meant God's people would rebuild the temple, and God would remove their guilt. The gold lampstand meant all the Lord's plans would happen because of His Spirit. The flying scroll meant there would be a curse on everyone who disobeyed God. The woman in a basket meant those who worshiped false gods would be taken away. The four chariots meant God's anger and wrath would be calmed.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

God was going to help His people and give them a different kind of king. Jesus is the King who came and rode humbly on a donkey, just as Zechariah said. Because Zechariah's prophecy came true in Jesus, we can have hope and forgiveness of sins when we trust in Jesus.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Emphasize many people in the world have never heard about Jesus. That's why missionaries go and tell them about Jesus. Adoniram and Ann Judson were missionaries who went to Myanmar many years ago to tell people about Jesus. Most people in Myanmar are not Christians. Even today, missionaries are still in Myanmar to tell people the good news of the gospel: Jesus came to rescue sinners! He died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. When we trust in Him as Lord and Savior, we have forgiveness and life with God forever.

PRAY

Dear God, Jesus is the King we needed. Thank You for providing for our need for a Savior by sending Your one and only Son. Help us share the great news of Jesus with others. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

God's plan all along was to bring Jesus into the world to rescue sinners. Zechariah said the Messiah is coming. God planned for Jesus to reign forever. One day, Jesus is coming back again and those who believe in Him will live with Him forever. Jesus is worthy of our praise.

- Why do you think God waited so long to send Jesus?
- How could waiting for something be better than getting it right away?

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Zechariah 9. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Zechariah 9:9. Remind kids that Zechariah said the Messiah is coming. If you were expecting a king to arrive, what would you look for? [*Allow kids to respond.*] We may have certain ideas about how a king should arrive, but this king—the promised Messiah—was not like other kings. King Jesus would come on a donkey, and He would reign forever.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Zechariah 9:9 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What was the main message Zechariah came to deliver?

Guide kids to recall that Zechariah said the Messiah is coming. Jesus was coming to be the King of kings, Lord of lords, and Prince of peace.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 9:6.)

2. Describe a time when you tried to do the right thing when everyone around you was doing the wrong thing.

Invite kids to share. Point out that Zechariah had some stern messages for those who disobeyed God. God told the people to return to Him. God calls us today to come near to Him and turn away from sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Jas. 4:8.)

3. How can we be encouraged to obey God even when it's difficult?

Affirm that obeying God may not always be the popular choice, but it is always the right choice. God must punish sin. We show we love God when we obey His commands.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 15:14.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: Bibles, beanbags, marker, poster board or large sheet of paper

Before the session, write all the words and phrases from the key passage in random order on poster board. Position the poster board on the floor. Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Jeremiah 29:11. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Text.

Invite kids to take turns tossing a beanbag onto the words of the key passage in order. When a player's beanbag lands on the first word, the entire class will say that word aloud. When a player lands on the next word, kids will start at the beginning and say each word in order up to the current word. Continue word by word until kids say the entire key passage.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, acknowledging God as the one eternal King. Declare that Jesus will rule forever; and one day, all will worship Him. Ask God to help kids follow Jesus and share with others the good news that Jesus saves and is coming again.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Tea tags

Supplies: individually-wrapped tea bags, cardstock, colored pencils, tape, stamp or stickers with church info (optional)

(Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.)

Distribute the supplies. Ask kids to write *The Messiah has come. He is Jesus!* on pieces of cardstock. Explain that they will decorate a card, tape a tea bag to it, and give it to a friend at church or at school.

Point out that people in Southeast Asia love to serve tea to their guests. Encourage kids to share a tea bag with their friends and tell them about Jesus. This is a way that they can be on mission.

Give kids time to decorate their cards. Let them choose a tea bag and tape it to the card. If available, include a stamp or sticker with your church's information.