

Use Week of:

## Unit 17 • Session 4

# Zechariah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:**  
Zechariah

**STORY POINT:**  
Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

**KEY PASSAGE:**  
Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:**  
How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.



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Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [ministrygrid.com/gospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/gospelproject).

## LEADER Bible Study

Zechariah was a priest who had been born in Babylon. He had returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. At this time, the prophet Haggai was bringing God's message to His people. The Judean exiles were struggling to finish rebuilding God's temple. In fact, several years had passed without progress on the temple when God called Zechariah to prophesy to His people.

Zechariah's message was twofold: first, look back and remember the past. Second, look forward and prepare for the future. God wanted His people to learn from the mistakes of their parents and grandparents who had ignored the prophets' warnings. Zechariah set out to encourage the people.

The Book of Zechariah is organized into eight visions, four messages, and two oracles. The visions Zechariah saw each symbolized something God would do—such as rebuild Jerusalem, judge Israel's enemies, and remove national sin. (See Zech. 1–6.) A couple of years later, God spoke to Zechariah again. This time, God spoke four messages to respond to a question the people had about fasting. (Zech. 7:3)

In the last six chapters, Zechariah changed the subject to the future of God's kingdom. Chapters 9–12 are rich with Messianic prophecy; the words are quoted often in the New Testament. Compare Zechariah 9:9 with John 12:15; Zechariah 11:13 with Matthew 27:9; and Zechariah 12:10 with John 19:37.

As you teach kids about Zechariah, emphasize God's promise: "A king is coming." Zechariah's visions were significant to the reality of God's people at that time, but a greater reality awaited. Zechariah pointed to Jesus, the coming deliverer who would be struck and pierced to take away sin. God would deal with His people's enemies. He would cleanse His people. "They will call on my name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God' (Zech. 13:9). Under the rule of King Jesus, our future is incredibly bright.

# The BIBLE Story

## Zechariah the Prophet

*Zechariah*

When God's people stopped rebuilding God's temple, God sent prophets to give His people a message. Zechariah (ZEK uh RIGH uh) 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 parents and grandparents and great-grandparents. "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. Everything was calm and quiet. But 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.** Like the horses of the first vision, they would patrol the earth.

**God told Zechariah to collect silver and gold from the people. "Use the gold and silver to make crowns," He said, "and 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.*

## Storytelling Tips

### • **Echo the story**

**point:** Invite the kids to listen closely as you tell the story. Each time you say the name *Zechariah*, challenge them to say today's story point: "Zechariah said the Messiah is coming."

### • **Incorporate art:**

Create signs with symbols for the eight visions God gave Zechariah. Distribute the signs among the kids. When you mention that vision during the story, instruct the kid holding that sign to stand up.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Zechariah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Zechariah

**STORY POINT:** Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

## Welcome time

Greet each kid 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.

**SAY** • How exciting it is when someone special in our life comes for a visit! Just the news of his or her upcoming arrival is enough to keep us thinking about it for days. In today's Bible story, the prophet Zechariah had some great news: someone was coming. We'll find out more soon.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Set 'Em Straight" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Set 'Em Straight" on the activity page. Kids should unscramble the Bible book names of the Major and Minor Prophets. Guide them to use the table of contents in the Bible if they need help.

**SAY** • These prophets were messengers of God, and they played important parts in God's story. There is one prophet who is unlike any other prophet. ***Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.***

## Session starter (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Categories game

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.”

**SAY** • Which category was hardest? Do you know what will happen in the future? We can’t predict the future with certainty, but God gave the prophet Zechariah eight visions to explain what would happen in Israel’s future.

### LOW PREP

- paper
- pens
- stopwatch or timer

### OPTION 2: Vision matching

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.

- index cards
- marker
- scissors

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.

**SAY** • All of these things are part of our Bible story today. God gave the prophet Zechariah eight visions about the future. We’ll find out what each vision meant.

## Transition to teach the story



# TEACH the Story



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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire  
• suitcase  
• cell phone

*[Leader enters with a suitcase and pretends to look at the map on his or her phone.]*

**LEADER** • I have all my bags and am finally ready to head to my house. I'm using this map on my phone to figure out the fastest way to get there. But this map is full of new symbols that are pretty confusing. I guess some things have changed while I was gone. Some of the streets are red, and there are some arrows and even warning symbols on some places. It sure would help if understood what all this meant.

In today's Bible story, you will hear about eight visions God gave Zechariah. These visions included some interesting messages, and each of the visions meant something important. God gave Zechariah an important message to share. Let's find out what it was.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • God used Zechariah in amazing ways to get His messages to His people. Zechariah was faithful to share the messages God had given him, but like the prophets before him, Zechariah was not a perfect prophet. There is only one perfect Prophet: Jesus. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.***

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

**LEADER** • We've talked about so many different prophets! See if you can find them on the timeline when I name them: Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Obadiah. [*Allow volunteers to point out the stories.*]

Great job. Today we will learn about the prophet Zechariah. God sent Zechariah and Haggai to encourage God's people as they rebuilt the temple. 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. ***Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.***

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to the Book of Zechariah. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Zechariah the Prophet."

• Bibles  
• "Zechariah the Prophet" video  
• Big Picture Question Poster  
• Bible Story Picture Poster  
• Story Point Poster



**LEADER** • Zechariah had great news to share: The Messiah was coming to God's people! That's not all Zechariah had to share. Let's see if you can remember what each vision was about.

Name each vision and allow kids to describe its meaning. Give Scripture references and encourage kids to refer to the Bible to check their answers.

- Horsemen—The Lord would punish His enemies. The Lord's house would be rebuilt, and His cities would be blessed again. (Zech. 1:8,17)
- Four horns and craftsmen—Israel's enemies would be defeated. (Zech. 1:18,20-21)
- Man with a measuring tape—God would be a wall of protection around Jerusalem. (Zech. 2:1-3,10)
- Joshua the high priest—God's people would rebuild the temple, and God would remove their guilt. (Zech. 3:1,9)
- Gold lampstand—All the Lord's plans would happen because of His Spirit. (Zech. 4:2-3,6)
- Flying scroll—There would be a curse on everyone who disobeyed God. (Zech. 5:1-3)
- Woman in a basket—Those who worshiped false gods would be taken away. (Zech. 5:5-11)
- Four chariots—God's anger and wrath would be calmed. (Zech. 6:1,8)

**LEADER** • God's message did not end with the visions. God told Zechariah to gather silver and gold and make a crown for Joshua. This crown would represent that King Jesus was coming. This was an important prophecy for God's people. **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming!**

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • 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.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 147 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

## Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 17, Session 4" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why God waited so long to send Jesus. Guide them to discuss how waiting for something could be better than getting it right away.

• "Unit 17, Session 4" questions from kids video



## Missions moment (3 minutes)

Display a world map. Show kids how far away Myanmar (in Southeast Asia, west of Thailand) is from the United States. Explain that Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, is home to about 54 million people. Ask a volunteer to come to the map and name some of the countries that are near Myanmar.

• world map

**LEADER** • **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** Today, we tell people that the Messiah *has* come! Jesus is the Messiah! 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.

### Key passage (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "A Future and a Hope (Jer. 29:11)" song

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Jeremiah 29:11.

**LEADER** • 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.

Lead kids in singing "A Future and a Hope (Jer. 29:11)."

### Sing (4 minutes)

- "Always in Control (This I Know)" song

Open your Bible and read aloud Revelation 17:14.

**LEADER** • Jesus is the King His people were waiting for. One day, everyone will worship the Lord. Let's worship Him together now.

Sing together "Always in Control (This I Know)."

### Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**LEADER** • Dear God, Jesus is the King we need. 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.

### Dismiss to apply the story

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

# APPLY the Story



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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- 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.

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Jeremiah 29:11 together.

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.

**SAY** • In our story today, **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** God sent Jesus so His people could have a hope and a future in Him. When we trust in Jesus by faith, He welcomes us into God's family and gives us life with Him forever.

## Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to the Book of Zechariah. Remind kids that Zechariah

was sent to encourage the people to finish rebuilding the temple, but he also encouraged the people to rebuild their relationship with God and truly worship Him. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Zechariah 9:9.

**SAY • Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** This was great news for God's people but bad news for God's enemies. 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.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

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.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.



## LOW PREP

- 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.

- Bibles
- paper plates
- markers
- string
- scissors
- tape

### Activity choice (10 minutes)



#### OPTION 1: Tea tags

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.

**SAY** • People in Southeast Asia love to serve tea to their guests. We'll share a tea bag with our friends and tell them about Jesus. This is a way that we 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.

#### OPTION 2: Prophecies fulfilled

Before the session, write the following references on separate paper plates: *Genesis 3:15; 1 John 3:8; Genesis 12:3; Acts 3:25-26; 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Matthew 1:1; Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:14-15; Isaiah 40:3-4; John 1:23; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:8-10.*

Arrange the plates in a circle. Provide string, tape, scissors, and Bibles. Challenge kids to work together to match each prophecy from the Old Testament with the passage in the New Testament that describes the prophecy's fulfillment. Kids should cut lengths of string to stretch between the prophecy and its fulfillment, taping the ends of the string to the paper plates.

**SAY** • More than 500 years before Jesus was born, Zechariah gave God's people a message of hope. God was going to help His people and give them a different kind of king. But Zechariah's messages were not just for the people of that day, they were also for us. **Zechariah**

**said the Messiah is coming.**

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.

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

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

## **Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. 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.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Vision Drawings" on the activity page. Kids will read each set of verses in the Bible and draw pictures to show Zechariah's visions.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Vision Drawings" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.