

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH

ZECHARIAH



KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 25:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah, saying He would be a humble King who would build a new and better kingdom. Jesus is the Messiah King. Those who trust in Him are forgiven of their sin and welcomed into His kingdom.

STORY POINT: Zechariah shared that God's kingdom will be established forever.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Zechariah was a prophet during the same time as Ezra and Nehemiah. Zechariah's words were an encouragement to the people of God as they rebuilt the temple.

Zechariah reminded people that they were building a temple to not only be a place of worship, but a temple that would serve as a reminder of God's everlasting promises. Zechariah prophesied about the coming of the Messiah. He reminded people that God's kingdom will last forever and that the coming Messiah will reign eternally.

More specifically, Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would come to them humbly, riding on a donkey. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy on Palm Sunday when He entered Jerusalem to crowds carrying palm branches, declaring Him to be the one who comes in the name of the Lord. As Jesus entered the town that day, He came riding on a donkey. Jesus knew the prophecy from Zechariah would declare boldly and publicly that He is the Messiah.

Another prophecy in Zechariah 6:12-13 declares: "You are to tell him: This is what the Lord of Armies says: Here is a man whose name is Branch; he will branch out from his place and build the Lord's temple. Yes, he will build the Lord's temple; he will bear royal splendor and will sit on his throne and rule. There will also be a priest on his throne, and there will be peaceful counsel between the two of them." In this prophecy, Zechariah reminded the people that the temple they were building was a foreshadowing of one who would come and bring the presence of God to us. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, He made the way to bring people into God's presence forever. Jesus is now seated at the Father's right hand, exalted to reign forever.

The book of Zechariah reminds us that Jesus is fulfillment of God's plan to send a Messiah who would save people from sin. As you teach, remind kids that Jesus invites them to trust in Him to be saved, and that one day, He will return to establish His kingdom forever.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "A Better Kingdom" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ paper crowns, 2
- ☐ red papers, 1 per kid



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ ball

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ dry erase board
- ☐ dry erase marker

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "A Better King" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "The Prophet Zechariah" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 17, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Jim and Jean Leeper Photos" printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "This Is the Lord (Isaiah 25:9)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What is something you would like to make better about the world? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “A Better Kingdom” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we will see how the prophet Zechariah shared about God’s future kingdom and how it will be better than anything we experience on this earth.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: REIGN TO SERVE

Form kids into two teams. Provide each kid with red paper and scissors and instruct them to cut out a heart from the paper. Tell kids to write the word **SERVE** on their hearts. Then form each team into two lines on opposite sides of the room. Place a paper crown on the first kid. Explain that kids with the crowns will race to the other team, lay their heart down, and run back to their team. Then kids will pass the crown off to the next kid who will repeat the same actions. The first team to pass off all their hearts wins.

| **SAY** “When you wore the crown, you raced to lay down your ‘serve hearts’ on the other team’s side. This reminds me of how Jesus is the true King who came to serve others by laying down His life for their sins. Jesus showed His love for us by being humble and dying in our place. Today, we will see how the prophet Zechariah foretold how Jesus, the Messiah King, would come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Jesus came to forgive our sin and invite us into His kingdom forever.”

☐ OPTION 2: MIRROR ME



Form kids into pairs. Explain that kids in each pair will try to mirror one another with an exact posture. Tell kids that they can perform one of three postures: praying hands, raised hands above their head, or hands shaped into a heart. Direct pairs to stand back to back. Then count to three and tell kids to turn and face each other while performing one of the three postures. Tell kids they cannot talk or give any clues about which posture to take. If kids match their partner, award them a point. Play as time allows. The pair with the most points wins.

| **SAY** “Could you predict exactly what your partner would do each time? Only God knows with absolute certainty what we will do or say. God knows everything—past, present, and future—because He has planned the beginning from the end. Today, we will see how God gave the prophet Zechariah visions about the future. God wanted His people to hope in the better King and kingdom to come. **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER.**”





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

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

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so happy you are here! If you brought your Bible, can you please hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, our Bible story comes from the book of Zechariah in the Old Testament. Can you find Zechariah in your Bible? [Assist kids with finding Zechariah, if needed.]

Today, we will learn that **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray together: ‘God, thank You for being a good King who rules over the whole world. Thank You for Jesus, who came to forgive us of our sin and build a better kingdom. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.** Let’s say the answer one more time: **Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.**

God promised that He would send the Messiah into the world to rescue people from sin. From Genesis to Revelation, the entire Bible shows us God’s plan to send Jesus, the Messiah, into the world. The Old Testament prophets foretold the coming Messiah, and the New Testament authors confirmed that the Messiah had come and would come again to create a new heaven and earth. Today, we will learn how the prophet Zechariah shared that a Messiah was coming to establish God’s kingdom forever. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “God brought His people home to Jerusalem just as He promised. The people laid the new foundation for God’s temple and began rebuilding the temple. While God’s enemies tried to stop the building of the temple, God sent the prophet Haggai to encourage God’s people to keep building. God provided for them and made a way for the temple to be completed. Today, we will see that Zechariah encouraged God’s people with the promise that His kingdom would be established forever. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Zechariah 1:1-6,16,21; 2:8-9; 5:6; 7; 9:9; 13:1-2,9. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Prophet Zechariah.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH

“ Zechariah (ZEK uh RIGH uh) was one of the prophets God sent to encourage the people to rebuild the temple. God told Zechariah what would happen in the future, and then Zechariah told the people what God said.

God said, “Return to me, and I will return to you. Do not be like your ancestors, who did not listen when the prophets said to repent.” Then God gave Zechariah eight different visions. In these visions, God shared His future plans for His people and the city of Jerusalem.

An angel told Zechariah that God loved His people and would again comfort them. God said, “In mercy, I have returned to Jerusalem; my house will be rebuilt within it.” God said He would destroy Israel’s enemies, and after Jerusalem was rebuilt, many nations would come to Jerusalem and God would dwell among them.

After these visions, the people came to Zechariah and asked if they should fast like they did every year. They were wanting God to see their fasting and to bless them. The Lord spoke through Zechariah and said, “When you fast, do you do it for me? Or do you do it for yourself? Here is what you should do: be loving and compassionate to one another. Do not mistreat the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, or the poor. Do not plan evil against one another.”

God reminded Zechariah how the people’s ancestors were stubborn and did not listen. **God said that even though His people were punished for their sin, He was going to be faithful to save them.** They will be His people, and He will be their faithful and righteous God.

Then Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah who would come, saying, “Look, Jerusalem! Your King is coming to you, humble and riding on a donkey. He will proclaim peace to the nations.” Zechariah said a future day was coming when **God would wash away people’s sin** and remove the idols from Jerusalem. **God would build a new kingdom through the Messiah.** On that day, “God will say, ‘You are My people,’ and they will answer, ‘The LORD is our God.’”

Christ Connection: Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah, saying He would be a humble King who would build a new and better kingdom. Jesus is the Messiah King. Those who trust in Him are forgiven of their sin and welcomed into His kingdom. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Recall it: Invite kids to name other prophets they learned about who had visions from God.

Look forward: Invite kids to turn to Matthew 21:1-11 to see how Zechariah’s prophecy came true.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ When the people returned to Jerusalem, the city was in ruins. It was a reminder of the devastation sin caused. God didn’t want His people to turn back to the sinful ways of their ancestors. So God sent Zechariah to give the people a message. What did Zechariah tell the people? Look at Zechariah 1:1-4. **[Ask a volunteer to read Zechariah 1:1-4 aloud.]** God warned His people not to be like their ancestors, who refused to listen to His prophets. The people ignored God’s warnings and suffered the consequences by being exiled to Babylon. But now, God was giving His people another opportunity to obey Him and show their love for Him. God gave Zechariah visions to share with the people to encourage them and give them hope. Through these visions, **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER.**

When the people asked if they should fast, what did God say? Look at Zechariah 7:6,8-10. **[Ask a volunteer to read Zechariah 7:6,8-10 aloud.]** God told the people to ask themselves if their fasting was for God or if it was for themselves. It can be easy to do outward actions that make us look good or make us feel better about ourselves. But if we’re not motivated by love for God, then the actions are empty. Instead, God wanted their actions to show that they loved Him and others. God shared how they could show they loved Him and others by showing compassion to one other, treating each other fairly, and not planning evil against one another.

God reminded the people of their sin and punishment, but He also shared that He would be faithful to provide salvation and the forgiveness of sins. Zechariah shared about God’s future plans for the Messiah. Who did God say He would send? Look at Zechariah 9:9. **[Ask a volunteer to read Zechariah 9:9 aloud.]** The King, Jesus Christ, would come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey. And just like Zechariah foretold, Jesus came to save everyone who believes in Him. Through Jesus, God’s kingdom would be established forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ The people were rebuilding Jerusalem after it had been destroyed because of their sin. This reminds us that what we have now is temporary and will not last forever. But God’s kingdom will last forever because it is built by the eternal King Jesus. When we put our faith in Jesus as our Savior, we are forgiven of sin and will have a home with Him in His forever kingdom. Have you trusted in Jesus and are you currently following Him? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 17, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Sometimes it’s hard to love everyone. What are some ways to help us love others?
2. Jesus put others before Himself. How can you put others before yourself?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Jim and Jean Leeper Photos” printable. Remind kids that the Leepers were missionaries to Germany, Turkey, and Bosnia.

SAY “Jean Leeper grew up as a shy, small-city Michigan girl. She hadn’t planned on becoming a missionary, but she learned to trust God in all the adventures that came her way. Alongside her husband, Jean served the people of Germany, Turkey, and Bosnia by welcoming them into her home and showing them hospitality. This means Jean was kind and generous toward others, showing love and meeting the needs of others.”

Tell kids that Jean was busy raising four kids, but she always welcomed anyone into her home who needed their help. Their church was filled with soldiers far away from their homes and young married couples away from their families. Jean and Jim created a family for these people and always made them feel welcome and included. The church members were always welcome to come to the Leepers’ home if they needed a meal or a place to stay. This gift of hospitality gave Jim and Jean time to build friendships with the people. Jean loved to take care of and support people.

Pray, thanking God for missionaries like the Leepers who showed humility and love by welcoming others into their home and meeting their needs. Remind kids that because Jesus has met our greatest need—forgiveness of sin—we can be welcomed into His kingdom forever.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Isaiah 25:9 together.

SAY “God made the way for people to be saved and live in His kingdom forever. Salvation comes only from trusting in Jesus Christ. Because of this, God is worthy of our praise.”

Form kids into pairs. Lead kids to alternate saying the words of the key passage back and forth to one another. Tell kids to start slow. Then challenge kids to say it as fast as they can.

Lead kids to sing “This Is the Lord (Isaiah 25:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Dear God, thank You for loving us and providing salvation through Your Son, Jesus. Thank You for keeping Your promises to send the Messiah. Help us remember that this world is temporary and to keep our hearts focused on You and Your kingdom. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Zechariah 9. Explain that the book of Zechariah was written by the prophet Zechariah. Of the minor prophets, Zechariah contains the most passages about the Messiah's coming.

Consider pointing out the city of Jerusalem (H5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Zechariah 9:9 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Zechariah told God’s people that the Messiah was coming. If you were expecting a king to arrive, what would you look for? **[Allow responses.]** The Messiah wouldn’t come like the people expected. The promised Messiah was not like other kings. King Jesus is a humble king who would come on a donkey. He came to serve others and lay down His life for their sin.

When we trust in Jesus for salvation, He changes our hearts so that we desire to live like Him. Believers want to be humble and serve others out of their love for God and their love for others. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What does it look like to be humble? ”

Tell kids that being humble means thinking of others before yourself and not acting like you are better than anyone else. All people are sinners and in need of a Savior. We can show humility by putting others first, listening to others, praying for others, thinking of ways to help others, and so on. Jesus is the humble King because He put others first, even to the point of dying for their sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:3-7.)

SAY “ Why do you think it’s important to think about God’s eternal kingdom? ”

Remind kids that this world will not last. Jesus is working to build His kingdom that will last forever. As Christians live on this earth, their minds should be focused on how they can live for God’s kingdom now. Even while believers wait for Jesus to return, they can show how they are trusting in Him and living for His kingdom by how they love God and obey Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col. 3:1-4.)

SAY “ Why will Jesus’ kingdom be better? ”

Share how Jesus will return and His kingdom will be fully established forever. In Jesus’ kingdom, believers will see God face to face and enjoy Him forever. Explain that in His kingdom there will be no sin, death, or sadness. Tell kids that His kingdom will be perfect. Those who trust in Jesus will no longer sin, and they will love God and others rightly. There will be everlasting peace, joy, and love. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rev. 21:1-4.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: FOOT TO FOOT



Direct kids to form a circle, standing with feet shoulder-width apart and foot to foot with the kid on either side. Hand a ball to a kid and direct her to pass the ball on the floor, using only her hands, through the legs of another kid in the circle. The ball cannot leave the ground. Also, kids' feet cannot move but must remain firmly planted. When the ball passes under someone's legs, he or she is out. When a kid is out, he leaves the circle. The remaining kids tighten the circle, still standing foot to foot. If the ball is picked up or hit out of the circle in any other way, whoever hit the ball is out.

SAY “ There was only one way for the ball to get outside of the circle just as there is only one way for people to enter the kingdom of God. Zechariah shared that God’s kingdom would be established forever through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only way back to God, and when we trust in Him we are invited into God’s kingdom. **ZECHARIAH SHARED THAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER.** ”

☐ OPTION 2: PROPHECY TO FULFILLMENT

On a dry erase board, write the references of Zechariah’s prophecies about the Messiah and their fulfillment in the New Testament: Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:4-5 (the Messiah humble on a donkey); Zechariah 11:12-13 and Matthew 27:1-10 (the betrayal of the shepherd/ Jesus), Zechariah 12:10 and John 19:31-37 (the piercing of His side), Zechariah 13:7 and Matthew 26:31,56 (the Shepherd struck and the sheep scattered).

Form kids into four groups and assign each group one of the prophecies to look up. Invite groups to share how the prophecy was fulfilled through Jesus, the Messiah.

SAY “ **Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.** And Zechariah and many other prophets prophesied the Messiah’s coming. God always keeps His promises, and at the right time, He sent Jesus into the world to save people from sin. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved and welcomed into His kingdom forever. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- 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 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?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for sending the Messiah to establish His kingdom forever. As time allows, lead kids to complete “A Better King” on the activity page.