

PPT Title

Zechariah

Main Point: God is full of mercy. He wants people to believe His message of love and forgiveness.

Key Verse: *Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.* - Luke 1:78-79

Props: a white piece of paper with SIN written in red marker, placed inside of a clear plastic sleeve; one red dry erase marker, one permanent red marker, small cloth or eraser; robe, incense and match; a piece of parchment paper with "His name is John" written on it

BACKGROUND/LOOKING FOR THE MESSIAH

Say: We have talked about many pieces of God's plan to save people from their sins. Today we will start to see how God put all the pieces together.

First of all, we saw that in the beginning, God created everything and it was very good. There was no pain, no suffering, and no death on the earth. But, sadly it did not stay that way. Satan, the prideful fallen angel, tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God. Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan instead of God, and they sinned. Their sin separated them from God because God is holy (Isaiah 59:2). Romans 6:23 tells us that the result of sin is death. **Ask:** What is the opposite of death? *Life.* **Say:** Listen to what the Bible says about life.

Problem:
sin = death & separation
from God

Problem:
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from God
Solution:
blood = life

The life of each creature is in its blood. So I have given you the blood of animals to pay for your sin on the altar. Blood is life. That is why blood pays for your sin. - Leviticus 17:11



Say: God is a loving God. He does not want people to be separated from Him. God gave His people a way to cover their sins. God required His people to kill an animal as a sacrifice in order to pay for their sins. We saw in the story of Cain and Abel that Abel's animal sacrifice was acceptable to God. Sometimes the father of the family would make a sacrifice for his family, and once a year the high priest would make a sacrifice for the whole nation of Israelites. **Call up a boy volunteer.** **Say:** Ok, let's say you are the dad of a family. You and your family have sinned, so you must take a flawless, first-born, male lamb and kill it to cover the sins of you and your family. This seems so icky, and you would certainly dread having to do it, but you are just thankful that God has given you a way for the sins of you and your family to be covered. **Hold up your plastic sleeve with the word "SIN" showing through. Give the volunteer a red DRY ERASE marker. Instruct him to "cover" the sin with the marker.** **Say:** How awesome. God has allowed your sins to be covered. What a relief! You feel cleansed and renewed as you leave the temple. You think to yourself, "I'll do better from now on. I don't ever want to watch another innocent lamb die on my behalf." But the next day, guess what? You get angry at your neighbor, and that anger is sin. **Take your cloth and wipe off the dry erase marker.** **Say:** What do you have to do now? **Make another sacrifice. Have him scribble it out again.** **Say:** That's good - for a short time - but then you sin again. **Wipe it off**

again. Repeat this cycle several times.

Ask: Does anyone see a problem with this system? *Blood is icky, many animals died.*

Say: The main problem with this system was that it was a **temporary** solution. Temporary means it did not last. Now, don't think that because there was a problem with this system that God made a mistake. God NEVER makes mistakes! This system had a purpose. By watching an innocent animal die, the people could see how serious their sin was to the Lord. And by having to sacrifice over and over, they were reminded that they needed a solution that was not **temporary** (Hebrews 10:3). They needed a **PERMANENT** solution.

Of course, God already knew all of these things. He had planned a permanent solution to save people from their sin before He even created the first people (2 Timothy 1:9). God would send the permanent solution **at just the right time** (Romans 5:6). When the permanent solution came, the sins of everyone who accepted the solution would be taken care of forever. It would be like this: **Take your permanent marker and scribble out the word SIN. Make sure the word is COMPLETELY covered. Hand your cloth to the volunteer and ask him to wipe it off.** **Say:** Their sin would be blotted out forever (Acts 3:19). **Thank your volunteer.**

While God was waiting for just the right time, He made promises about the permanent solution. God made it clear that the permanent solution would be **a man** (Genesis 3:15), and that He would come **from the family of Abraham** (Galatians 3:8) who were the Israelites or Jews. The Bible calls this man the Messiah, or chosen One (John 1:41). The Bible makes it very clear that this man, the Messiah, would **take away the sins of the world** (Isaiah 53:5-6). And God promised that He would send a **messenger** to announce that the Messiah had come (Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40:3).

God's people heard His promises and waited anxiously for the permanent solution, the Messiah, to come.

Note to Teacher: Be careful not to say that the animal sacrifices took away or wiped away sins. Use the term "covered their sins." For further study on the limitations of animal sacrifices, and the final perfect sacrifice God provided by sending the Messiah, Jesus Christ, please read Hebrews 10:1-23.

THE TEMPLE (1 Kings 6 - 8, 2 Kings 25:9, John 2:20)



God had instructed His people to build a temple in which they could pray and make their animal sacrifices to Him. The Lord was very specific about how to build this temple, and He was very specific about who could enter. In the middle of the temple was a small room called the "Holy of Holies." This was a sacred place. Here, in this special place, God came to be near His people. Only the Jewish high priest could enter this place, and only one time each year. He came to offer a sacrifice to cover the sins of the Israelite people. Before he could enter, he had to wash himself, put on special clothing, carry animal blood for the covering of sins, and burn incense so smoke would shield his eyes from a direct view of God (Hebrews 9:7, Leviticus 16:13). The Israelites did this over and over for hundreds of years as they waited, and prayed for the Messiah to come.

JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BORN (Luke 1:11-25)

Say: For 400 years, there had been no new word from the Lord. People were living in spiritual starvation. But God ALWAYS has a remnant of people who love Him and trust Him. There was a Jewish couple named Zechariah and Elizabeth who were very old. They both loved God and worshipped God. They were upright in His sight. There was

one thing that they did not have that they longed for and prayed for: a child.



Zechariah was a priest in the temple. At this particular time, he was chosen to go into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. This was a very important job for the priest to do. Israelite history tells us that a priest would only have this honor once in his lifetime. **Teacher:** Show the robe and put it on. **Say:** Zechariah went behind a very thick curtain and was alone with God. **Teacher:** Burn some incense.

Say: Just as the smell of incense fills a room, so our prayers rise up to God. Our prayers and praise "smell good" to God (Psalm 141:2). Zechariah was praising God and praying to God inside the temple behind the thick curtain. While he was inside, there were many worshippers outside of the temple praying. While Zechariah was burning incense before the Lord, an angel appeared to him. Whenever angels appear to people in the Bible, people become very afraid (Genesis 19:1, Luke 1:29). The angel had some wonderful news to tell Zechariah! The angel from God told Zechariah that his prayers had been answered, and he would have a son. The angel said:



He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. He will be important in the Lord's eyes. - Luke 1:14-15

There were several "He wills" that God gave: *"He must never use wine or other such drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born. He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. And he will prepare the way for the Lord. He will have the same spirit and power that Elijah had. He will teach parents how to love their children. He will also teach people who don't obey to be wise and do what is right. In this way, he will prepare a people who are ready for the Lord." - Luke 1:15b-17*

And God even gave this baby a name: JOHN (Luke 1:13).



John means, "The Lord is gracious." God is full of grace and longs to save those who trust and believe in Him. WOW! Just think, all those years Zachariah and Elizabeth had prayed for a child, and now, God was not only going to give them a child, but a son who would be GREAT in the sight of the Lord. And even better than that, the long-awaited Messiah was finally coming! And Zechariah's special son would be the one to announce His arrival!

But even though Zechariah heard the angel, Zechariah did not believe what the angel said (Luke 1:20). He doubted that God could do such a wonderful thing because he and his wife, Elizabeth, were very old. Because of Zechariah's unbelief, God caused him to not be able to speak.

Remember, all the people were praying outside of the temple. They were beginning to wonder what was taking Zechariah so long in the temple. Finally, he came out. Imagine their surprise when he came out and wasn't able to speak! He had to make hand motions to show them that an angel of the Lord appeared to him (Luke 1:22). It must have been very strange for the people to see that Zechariah could not speak. The Bible says that Zechariah went home.

God ALWAYS keeps His promises: Elizabeth became pregnant! Zechariah could not speak the entire time Elizabeth was pregnant. For nine months, Zechariah could not talk!

Application: Zechariah had prayed his entire adult life for two things. He prayed for a child, and he prayed for God to send the Messiah. In one moment, God announced that both of Zechariah's prayers were answered. Yet, when Zechariah heard this, he doubted that God could or would do these things. Sometimes when we pray for something for a long time, we forget that God is able to do anything, and that He wants what is good for His children. When we pray according to God's word, we can pray with

an expectant heart. We must remember that God is all-powerful, and He ALWAYS keeps His promises!

JOHN'S BIRTH (Luke 1:57-80)



Say: The time finally came for their baby to be born. All of Elizabeth's friends and family rejoiced that Elizabeth and Zechariah finally had a son. All the people there wanted to name him "Zechariah," after his father. But Elizabeth said his name should be John. The people turned to see what Zechariah thought. He motioned for some paper to write on. **Teacher:** Show the parchment paper that says "His name is John."

By obeying God and naming his son John, Zechariah proved that he finally believed what the angel had told him. Now he believed that God could do all that He promised to do. After he obeyed, God allowed him to speak. The Bible says, "Right away Zechariah could speak again. **His first words gave praise to God.**" (Luke 1:64)

Their friends and neighbors were all talking about this special boy. They could tell that the Lord was with him and they wondered what would become of him. Talk of John spread throughout the whole region (Luke 1:65-66).

After Zechariah praised God, listen to what he said:

And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace. - Luke 1:76-79 NLT

Application: God had an amazing plan for John. He was chosen to lead people to the Messiah. He was born to tell people the good news that their sins can be forgiven if they will trust in God's permanent solution.

God also has a very special plan for YOUR LIFE. First, God wants you to put your trust in the Messiah. In the upcoming weeks, we will learn more about the Messiah and how He did what the animal sacrifices could not do - take away sin forever (Hebrews 10:1, 10). Then, God's plan for you is for you to do just what John did - to lead others to the Messiah so their sins can be wiped away. Just like John, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can spread the good news of God's permanent solution (Acts 1:8).

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace. - Luke 1:78-79*

PPT Main Point

Main Point: God is full of mercy. He wants people to believe His message of love and forgiveness.