

## Zechariah & Malachi - The last of the post-exilic prophets

Zechariah was born in Babylon of a priestly family. He is both a priest and a prophet. He was a contemporary of Haggai. They were ministering to the same people at the same time. While Haggai was short and to the point--in your face, Zechariah was mystical and focused on the holy presence of God. He writes of 8 visions he had in one night--all indicative of a plan of God. Zechariah's purpose was to bring hope and encouragement to the insecure and unstable refugees. Only 50,000 returned to the land and they most likely felt small and jostled around by the powers surrounding them. Zechariah encourages them that God is with them and they will complete the building of the Temple.

We don't know much about Malachi. All we know is that he brings a message about a future messenger, a forerunner to Christ. His message contains the final words of God before the new covenant. This book is in dialectic form. It is an intensely personal conversation between God (God through the prophet Malachi) and the people of Israel.

Let's play out the roles of Zechariah and Malachi to gain insight into their messages from God. The role play is divided into two separate role plays--Zechariah and Malachi.

## Say it! Play it! Pray it! Zechariah

<b>Objectives:</b>	Play out the part of Zechariah as he shares his visions with the people Gain insight into our own faith. Have fun with your family.
<b>Number of Players:</b>	4 or more (narrator, God, Zechariah, the Angel of the Lord, the people of Israel, the man with the measuring line)
<b>Length:</b>	30 minutes
<b>Set up:</b>	You can get as elaborate as you like. As the story is played out, the separate characters should act out what is being said and dramatize how these events make them feel.

**Narrator:** In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

**God (to Zechariah):** The Lord has been very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Return to Me and I will return to you."'

**Narrator:** Then Zechariah shared the Lord's message with the people.

**The People of Israel:** (you can pick one person to be the spokesperson) Just as the Lord of hosts determined to do to us, according to our ways and according to our deed, so He has dealt with us.

**Narrator:** A vision comes to Zechariah.



# FAMILY STUDY

**Zechariah:** I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him were horses: red, sorrel, and white. Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me,

**The Angel of the Lord:** "I will show you what they are."

**Zechariah:** And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are the ones whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly."

**The Angel of the Lord:** O Lord of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?

**Zechariah:** And the Lord answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words. So the angel who spoke with me said to me,

**The Angel of the Lord:** Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal. I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be build in it. A surveyor's line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. My cities shall again spread out though prosperity; The Lord will again comfort Zion, and will again choose Jerusalem.

**Zechariah:** Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns. And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" So he answered me,

**The Angel of the Lord:** These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

**Zechariah:** Then the Lord showed me four craftsman. And I said, "What are these coming to do?"

**The Angel of the Lord:** These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

**Zechariah:** Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. So I said, "Where are you going?"

**The man with the measuring line:** To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.

**Zechariah:** And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him. who said to him, "run speak to this young man, saying: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. For I, 'says the Lord, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.

**God:** Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst. Many nations will be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst.

**Narrator:** Then Zechariah saw a vision of the high priest, Joshua.

**Zechariah:** Then I saw Joshua, the high priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire.' Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.



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**The Angel of the Lord:** Take away the filthy garments from him. See I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.

**Zechariah:** Let them put a clean turban on his head.

**Narrator:** So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. Then the Angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying,

**The Angel of the Lord:** Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, Then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here. Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree.'

**Zechariah:** Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me,

**The Angel of the Lord:** What do you see?

**Zechariah:** I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left. What are these my lord?

**The Angel of the Lord:** Do you not know what these are?

**Zechariah:** No my lord.

**The Angel of the Lord:** This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts. 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.'

**Zechariah:** What are these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left. And, what are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?

**The Angel of the Lord:** Do you not know what these are?

**Zechariah:** No, my lord.

**The Angel of the Lord:** these are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.

**Narrator:** Zechariah had eight visions all together. He shares his visions with the people and then addresses them with a message:

**Zechariah:** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. The Lord says, 'Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners



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free from the waterless pit. Return to the stronghold you prisoners of hope. Even today I declare that I will restore double to you. For I am the Lord their God, and I will hear them. Their children shall see it and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. I will whistle for them and gather them, For I will redeem them; and they shall increase as they once increased. I will sow them among the peoples, and they shall remember Me in far countries; they shall live, together with their children, and they shall return.

## Say it! Play it! Pray it! Malachi

<b>Objectives:</b>	Play out the part of Malachi as he shares his visions with the people Gain insight into our own faith. Have fun with your family.
<b>Number of Players:</b>	4 or more (narrator, God, Malachi, the people of Israel)
<b>Length:</b>	30 minutes
<b>Set up:</b>	You can get as elaborate as you like. As the story is played out, the separate characters should act out what is being said and dramatize how these events make them feel.

**Narrator:** The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

**God:** I have loved you says the Lord.

**The people of Israel:** In what way have You loved us?

**God:** Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness. They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever. Your eyes shall see and you shall say, 'The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'

A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? To you priests who despise My name.

**The people of Israel:** In what way have we despised your name?

**God:** You offer defiled food on My altar. You say, 'the table of the Lord is contemptible.' And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept your favorably?

**Malachi:** But now entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, will He accept you favorably?

**God:** Who is there among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, Nor will I accept an offering from your hands. For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every

place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations, but you profane it, In that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled; and its fruit, its food, is contemptible.' You also say, "Oh, what a weariness!" And you sneer at it. And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand? But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished--for I am a great King, and My name is to be feared among the nations.

And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to hear, to give glory to My name, I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Behold I will rebuke your descendants and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant with Levi may continue. My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear Me; So he feared Me and was reverent before My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity. But you have departed from the way; You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi. Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before the people, because you have not kept My ways but have shown partiality in the law.

Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in who you delight. Behold, He is coming, but who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the Lord and offering in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years

And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien--because they do not fear Me, for I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you.

**The people of Israel:** In what way shall we return?

**God:** Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me!

**The people of Israel:** In what way have we robbed You?

**God:** In tithes and offerings. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this. If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field. And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land.

Your words have been harsh against Me.

**The people of Israel:** What have we spoken against You?



# FAMILY STUDY

**God:** You have said, “It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt god and go free.”

**Narrator:** The those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name.

**God:** They shall be mine. On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him. Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up. That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for the shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this.

Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, Let I come and strike the earth with a curse.

**Discussion:** Have each person share how it felt to them to play the role they did and what insights they gained about the people they played, God’s character and their own life. What lessons do you learn that you can apply to your life in today’s world. How is your hoped strengthened in the fulfilled prophecies these prophets gave and the prophecies yet to be fulfilled?

**Prayer:** Close in prayer thanking God for His provision, for His mercies that are new each morning, and for all that you have learned and the fun you had with your family.