

December 2

Character: Zechariah

Setting: The Old Testament ends with the prophet Malachi describing a day of coming judgment, appealing to the people of Israel to repent, and promising the birth of a prophet whose teaching would turn Father's hearts back to their children and children's hearts to their fathers. This prophet would be born with a single purpose, to usher in the kingdom of heaven by preparing the people's hearts for Jesus, the Messiah.

Malachi's prophetic words were the last divine words spoken until the events of the New Testament began. As we read our bibles the period between the Old and New Testaments is only a flip of a few pages. But the actual interlude between Malachi's words and the birth of Jesus was 400 years. 400 years of silence from God. The heavens appeared to be sealed as the people of Israel heard nothing from God.

God broke His silence when He sent an angel to speak to a priest named Zechariah about the very prophet Malachi's last words spoke about. Therefore, Zechariah is our first "character of Christmas." The account of this interaction can be found in Luke 1:5-25.

Scripture: Luke 1:5-25 (Read)

Application: Zechariah's initial response to the angel's proclamation was unbelief. Because of his unbelief, he was silenced and unable to speak until his child was born. He certainly wasn't the first person to respond to God's words or promises with unbelief, nor was he the last person to respond this way. Spend some time with your family today discussing some of the unbelievable things God said he would do and then did. Start a family advent journal to record these examples as you journey through the "Characters of Christmas" with your Cornerstone family for the next few weeks. Discover the many ways people have responded to the "impossible" things our God has done both in Scripture and in our individual lives. Remind your children that nothing is impossible with God.

Prayer: Thank God that He is a God who is able to do more than we can ever imagine. Praise Him that His ways are not our ways, and His understanding is not our understanding. Ask God to give us faith to believe that He will do all He says He will do.