



KEY VERSE: The LORD . . . is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail. (Zephaniah 3:5)

# Justice Wins the Day

Lesson Scripture: **Zephaniah 3:1-2, 5, 12-13**

## God's Word

**1** Woe to the city of oppressors, rebellious and defiled! **2** She obeys no one, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the LORD, she does not draw near to her God.

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**5** The LORD within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame.

.....

**12** "But I will leave within you the meek and humble. The remnant of Israel will trust in the name of the LORD.

**13** They will do no wrong; they will tell no lies. A deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid."

# Bible Story

## Justice Wins the Day

### Zephaniah 3:1-2, 5, 12-13

Woe to sinful Jerusalem! At this time in Bible history, the city was full of violence and crime. Jerusalem had rebelled against God. Even when she had been wrong, Jerusalem would not accept correction from the Lord. God called to His people over and over, but in pride they turned away. They listened to no one, not even the voice of God. Jerusalem refused to be corrected. They would not worship their God.

The city of Jerusalem was *wicked* (evil), yet the Lord was righteous in their midst. God continued to be faithful and trustworthy every day. He continued to distribute justice and the Israelites continued to sin. The people did not trust in God. Israel did not draw near to God. But God's presence was still in the city. God does no wrong. He is always good. Every day, He shows justice. God does not fail, even when no one is listening.

The wicked were not ashamed of the things they were doing. Those who were left—the remnant—turned to God. They would be the meek and humble. They would trust in the name of the Lord and would not sin. They would be faithful to God and would not worship idols. They would be honest, and they would not tell lies. They would live lives that were pleasing to God and would live in peace. Those who followed and obeyed God would lie down in safety, and no one would make them afraid.

## We Are Winners!

### (Part 1)

"Dad, I'm nervous about the game today. We are playing a team that's undefeated," Jamillah explained.

"Your team is undefeated too. I think it's going to be a great game," Dad noted.

"I'm not so sure; I heard they have some players that are over the age limit. It's all over social media," Jamillah commented.

"That information can't be true. I don't think they would cheat to win a few softball games," Dad argued.

"Look at this picture of their team. They look older than a lot of the girls on my team. It's not going to be a fair game," Jamillah responded.

"I believe in your team. Let's see what happens tonight during the game," Dad said.



## Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius

Hello, everyone! Nicholas and Cornelius here. Had you heard of Zephaniah before today's lesson? To be honest, Cornelius and I had to do a little research on him and what we found was very interesting. Zephaniah is the ninth of twelve Minor Prophets. He prophesied during the reign of King Josiah sometime between 640–609 BC. Zephaniah's message is 2600 years old, but it's still very important. Do you know why?

# Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius

## We Are Winners!

### (Part 2)

"I was so nervous before the game started," Jamillah admitted. "But the coach talked to us and said that we didn't need to worry about the other team. We just needed to play the game like we always do."

"That was good advice. It looks like everyone followed it too," Dad noted.

"At first, I didn't want to. I didn't think it was fair to play older girls, but then I remembered what you said. I believe in my teammates too," Jamillah responded.

"You all played a great game, and I think today you learned more than how to play softball. You also learned that no matter if you win or lose, it's important to be honest—which makes you a winner every time," Dad explained.

When Zephaniah was a prophet, the people didn't think God would do anything about their sins. They acted like they did not care about what God had done or was going to do. Sometimes, today, we act the same way. We should learn from Zephaniah that the righteous judgment of God is going to happen. The good news is that God's mercy will prevail when we turn to Him. He will forgive us and restore us to Himself.



## Decode the Message

Under each dash is a combination of letters. Your task is to *decode* (figure out) the message from today's lesson by writing on each dash the letter that comes between the combination of letters in the alphabet (for example, a-c=b; z-b=a).

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 s-u    g-i    d-f    k-m    n-p    q-s    c-e    h-j    r-t  
 q-s    h-j    f-h    g-i    s-u    d-f    n-p    t-v    r-t  
 g-i    d-f    c-e    n-p    d-f    r-t    m-o    n-p  
 v-x    q-s    n-p    m-o    f-h  
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