

**Read: Zephaniah 3:14-17**

## Jesus Turns Back Our Enemies

### **Zephaniah 3:14-15**

Sing, Daughter Zion;  
shout aloud, Israel!  
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,  
Daughter Jerusalem!  
The Lord has taken away your punishment,  
he has turned back your enemy.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In 1970 the professional basketball teams of the New York Knicks and the Los Angeles Lakers faced off in a seven-game series for the NBA championship. Things started well for the Knicks. They won the first two games, but then the Lakers started taking over.

After six games, the teams were tied. The Knicks had won three games, but the Lakers were playing better and better, and they won three games too. Whoever won game number seven would be the champion, and it didn't look good for the Knicks.

The worst news was that the Knicks' star player, Willis Reed, was injured. Willis was six feet ten inches tall. He was the Most Valuable Player in the NBA, and he was famous for jumping up and sweeping the ball out of the air when his opponent tried to score. But Willis Reed had torn a muscle in his leg, and the Knicks fans were nervous that they would lose the championship if he couldn't play.

The day of the game arrived. The teams were warming up. Suddenly, the TV announcer said, "I think we see Willis coming out!" He was wearing his jersey and shorts. The whole crowd stood up and cheered before the game had even started. Why were they celebrating? Because Willis Reed was coming out to play! He did play, and the Knicks won the championship.

Today we have a reason to stand up and cheer. We can rejoice and sing because our hero is coming! Jesus is coming at Christmas.

Jesus is not famous for sweeping basketballs out of the sky. He's famous for taking our sins and throwing them into the depths of the sea, where nobody can ever find them. Jesus is famous for facing off against the devil and crushing him so that we are safe. Jesus is famous for dying on the cross and rising from the dead so that we don't need to be afraid of death—we'll rise just like he did.

Jesus is much more powerful than any basketball player, and here's the best news: He's on your team! You don't need to make up for your sins; Jesus did that. You don't need to defeat the

devil; Jesus did that. Jesus has turned back our enemies, and now he stays with us. Never again do we need to fear any harm. That's why at Christmas time, when Jesus comes, we rejoice and sing.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Who is our "hero" who arrives at Christmas?
- Why do we want Jesus to be on our "team"?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Name two enemies that Jesus has "turned back" so they can't harm you.
- God's Word today encourages us to "sing... and be glad with all your heart." Name your favorite song you like to sing to Jesus with all your heart.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Agree/Disagree: Because Jesus turns back our enemies, nothing terrible will happen to Christians. Explain your answer.
- List at least three ways you can show your joy (in your life or at home) for what Jesus has done for you.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to defeat our enemies. Fill our hearts with joy as we wait for you. Amen.