

Read: Malachi 3:1-7b

God's Laundry Day

Malachi 3:2,3 (EHV)

But who can endure the day when he comes? Who will remain standing when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, like launderers' bleach! ...He will purify the sons of Levi... They will belong to the LORD and bring him an offering in righteousness.

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

Karleigh and Claire let out a big sigh. It was that time of week again—laundry day. They had to gather up all the laundry around the house, separate it into piles, and start the first load in the washer. They did not enjoy this job, especially when the laundry was smelly or really dirty, but they knew the job had to get done. Everyone in the house needed clean clothes. No one wanted to wear ruffled, stained, dirty, smelly outfits. Claire placed the first load in the washer, measured out the laundry soap, and poured it into the washer. Karleigh set the right temperature for the water, closed the lid, and pushed start. Soon everyone would have clean clothes again.

About 400 years before the birth of Jesus, a prophet named Malachi talked about God's "laundry day" or more exactly, the Last Day when God would come to judge all people. His description seems a little scary. Yet in preparation for that day, the Lord promises to purify and cleanse his people of their dirty, smelly, disgusting sins. Like someone trying to break up a grass or food stain, the Lord will scrub at the dirty stains of their sins until they are clean. Like getting rid of a tough, ground-in stain, the Lord will work hard at cleansing us of our toughest, deepest sins.

In fact, cleansing us of our sins would take something that usually causes stains—blood. Normally, blood leaves a big stain that can ruin clothing, but not the blood of Jesus. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7b) Instead of staining, the blood of Jesus actually removes the stain of sin and makes us clean. We need the blood of Jesus to make us clean if we are going to be pure and holy in God's sight. We can't do it on our own. But the blood of Jesus works better than the best laundry soap!

Because Jesus makes us clean, we don't have to be afraid of God's laundry day. We can even look forward to it, because he has forgiven our sins and will bring us home to be with him in heaven.

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

- What makes us dirty and smelly in God's eyes?
- What does God use to make us clean?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How does the blood of Jesus cleanse us of our sins?
- TRUE or FALSE: The blood of Jesus cleanses us of most of our stains (of sin). (*Hint: Reread 1 John 1:7b.*)

Questions for Middle School and Above

- God expects us to be 100% holy. Why is being 99.999% holy not good enough?
- Recount something cringeworthy from your past—the thought of it still embarrasses you! Apply today's devotion to that memory. How does Jesus change how you feel?

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, you alone can make us holy. Lead us to see our dirty, smelly sins for what they really are and cleanse our hearts with your blood. Help us to look forward to your laundry day. Amen.