

**Read: Malachi 4:1-6**

## It's the End of the World... And I'm Dancing

### **Malachi 4:1-2**

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace...” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.”

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

What makes you dance? Fun music with a catchy beat? Of course! You can't help but dance. Your team winning the big game? Probably. You have to celebrate. How about hearing good news that you've been waiting for a long time? Absolutely! Doing a happy dance makes sense in all those situations. But how about this one: the end of the world. Does that make you want to dance and celebrate?

When God's Word describes the Last Day—that day when the world will come to an end, it's not usually happy. In fact, the Last Day often sounds frightening. Judgment and fear and destruction, the end of all things as we know it. Just consider the prophet Malachi's description, “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace.” He describes the Last Day like a superheated furnace blazing with fire. That's terrifying! There is no way that the end of world would cause us to dance and celebrate... or is there?

“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.” When calves are born during the cold winter, they must stay cooped up in their warm pens. They grow in size and strength, filling them with energy that needs to be let loose. When spring arrives and the barn gates finally open, they rush out, awkwardly bouncing around the barnyard. They're so excited to be free in the warm sunshine. They can't help but frolic and... dance.

So why would we dance on the Last Day? Malachi gives us a clue. “For you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.” Who is that “sun of righteousness”? Not the warm sunshine of spring, but the S-O-N of God, who will return on the Last Day to bring us home to heaven. Jesus, the Son of God, brings healing to our hurting souls—healing for our guilty consciences, healing for our broken hearts, healing for the sadness and hurt we experience every day, healing he earned for us on the cross. On that Last Day, Jesus will come back and bring us to be with him where there will be no more sadness—only joy, no more guilt—only healing, no more death—only life. So on that Last Day, let's dance!

*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 you start dancing?
- What will make you start dancing for joy when Jesus comes back?

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

- Why does the Last Day seem so frightening?
- How is Jesus like the sun that brings “healing in its rays”?

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

- *Explain this statement:* The Last Day will be the best day in a Christian’s life, even if they’ve died.
- How can you encourage your family or friends to look forward to the day when Jesus will come again?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, as we look forward to the Last Day, there is so much that could cause us fear. Keep us from becoming afraid as that day approaches. Instead, fill our hearts with hope for that day when you will bring healing for our souls and eternal joy in heaven. Amen.