

ISAIAH 13:6-13 WITHOUT GOD, WHAT'S LEFT?

⁶ *Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.* ⁷ *Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt.* ⁸ *Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame.*

⁹ *See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.* ¹⁰ *The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.* ¹¹ *I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.* ¹² *I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir.* ¹³ *Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.*

One of the final scenes in the movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the villain opens the recovered Ark in order to view its contents which he believes will bring him great wealth. Instead, as the camera moves in closer, his face displays a frozen bewilderment followed by the look of absolute and utter terror. The audience is not privy to what he sees, but we do witness its awesome power, for before our eyes, the man's hat and hair disappear, followed in order by his skin and then muscle, which melt from his face, and finally by his bones which disintegrate into powder and blow away. The director at that point presents one of the most graphic depictions of what happens when sin comes into direct contact with the Holy God. That which is sinful is literally uncreated in the presence of absolute holiness.

The difference between that scene and the Prophet's words to Judah is just a matter of scale. Where the movie illustrates the effect of God's direct presence on one sinner, Isaiah describes that same effect on the entire sinful world. In addition, on that day you will not have the options of not opening the box or looking away. Suddenly God will be there and no one will avoid his presence.

Will everyone be destroyed? The answer is no. Remember the promise that a remnant shall remain and that the remnant will recognize the sign of the promise which is the birth of the divine successor to David from a young girl in the midst of poverty and oppression. Jesus means "God is salvation." If we stand firm in our faith in Jesus, we will be remade, rather than unmade when God appears.

Thank you Lord for not leaving me without the knowledge of the horrible consequences of my sin. May I be inspired to receive this knowledge, not as a cause for despair, but rather a stimulus for repentance and faith. Help me to accept what Jesus has done for me on the cross and allow him to clothe me in his righteousness so I might stand on the day of his return.