

# Isaiah 24:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

## Analysis

**Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate.** This verse describes the devastating consequences of humanity's covenant-breaking. The Hebrew alah (אֱלֹהָה, "curse") refers specifically to covenant curses—the promised consequences for violating God's law (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The verb "devoured" (akal, אָכַל) suggests consumption by fire, portraying judgment as an unstoppable force consuming everything in its path.

The phrase "they that dwell therein are desolate" uses asham (אַשְׁאָם), meaning "held guilty" or "suffer for guilt." This emphasizes that desolation results from moral culpability, not arbitrary divine caprice. The dramatic declaration "the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" envisions wholesale destruction leaving only a remnant—a recurring biblical theme (Isaiah 1:9, 6:13, 10:20-22).

Isaiah 24-27 (called the "Isaiah Apocalypse") transcends local judgments to envision cosmic-scale divine intervention. This passage establishes that:

1. sin has universal, catastrophic consequences
2. God's covenant faithfulness includes executing curses against covenant-breakers
3. judgment purifies by removing the wicked
4. God preserves a remnant for redemptive purposes.

The New Testament echoes this vision in describing end-times tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22, Revelation 6-19).

## Historical Context

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Isaiah 24-27 forms a distinct apocalyptic section within the book, likely composed during or after the Assyrian crisis (701 BCE). Unlike earlier oracles against specific nations, these chapters envision universal judgment affecting "the earth" (erets)—a term denoting both the land of Israel and the entire world. This dual reference reflects Isaiah's theological vision that local judgments foreshadow cosmic consummation.

The "curse" language echoes the covenant curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, where God specified consequences for Israel's disobedience: famine, disease, military defeat, exile, and desolation. Ancient Near Eastern treaties similarly contained curse formulas, but Isaiah universalizes this concept—all humanity stands under covenant obligation to the Creator, and all face judgment for rebellion.

Archaeological evidence confirms the devastating impact of ancient warfare and divine judgment: destroyed cities, mass graves, and sudden population collapses. The Assyrian campaigns of 722 BCE (northern kingdom) and 701 BCE (Judah) left widespread destruction that validated Isaiah's warnings. This historical reality grounded prophetic visions of coming universal judgment when God would settle accounts with all nations.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding the covenant basis of God's curses help you appreciate both His justice and faithfulness to His Word?
2. What modern manifestations of humanity's rebellion against God can you identify that warrant divine judgment?
3. How should the reality that "few men" survive God's judgment shape your evangelistic urgency and compassion for the lost?
4. In what ways does the concept of a preserved remnant provide hope even in the midst of descriptions of devastating judgment?
5. How does this passage challenge contemporary assumptions about humanity's ability to solve global crises apart from repentance and divine intervention?

## Interlinear Text

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בָּעֵל	כִּי	אֶלְהָה	אֶכְלָה	אֶרְצָה	בְּאֶשְׂמָה	וְ
H5921	H3651	Therefore	hath	the curse	devoured	of the earth
			H423		H398	H776
						H816
וְשָׁבֵי	בְּהָעֵל	בְּהָעֵל	בְּרֻא	וְשָׁבֵי	וְשָׁבֵי	אֶרְצָה
and	they	that	dwell	H0	H5921	H3651
H3427					H2787	H3427
						H776
מִזְעָרָה:	אֲנָשִׁים	וְאֶנְשָׁאָר				
left	men	and few				
H7604	H582	H4213				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Malachi 4:1** (Parallel theme): For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

**Matthew 7:14** (Parallel theme): Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

**Romans 9:27** (Parallel theme): Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

**Leviticus 26:22** (Parallel theme): I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.

**Malachi 4:6** (Curse): And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

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