

# Joel 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed,  
because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are  
made desolate.

## Analysis

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**How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed** (mah ne'enechah behemah nivoku edrei baqar)—Even animals suffer the consequences of human sin. 'Groan' (ne'enechah) and 'perplexed' (nivoku) personify animal distress. Romans 8:19-22 teaches that creation itself groans under sin's curse, awaiting redemption.

**Because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate** (ki ein lahem mir'eh gam-edrei ha-tson ne'shamu)—Locusts consumed all vegetation, leaving nothing for livestock. The Hebrew ne'shamu (made desolate) uses the same root as 1:17's 'garners are laid desolate,' emphasizing total devastation. Innocent animals suffer for human covenant-breaking—a sobering picture of sin's ripple effects through creation.

## Historical Context

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Israel's economy depended on mixed agriculture and pastoralism. Deuteronomy 8:7-9 promised a land of grain, vines, flocks, and herds. Locust plagues destroyed this integrated system. Historical records (e.g., Pliny's Natural History) document devastating locust swarms in the ancient Near East that could strip entire regions bare within days.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does animal suffering due to human sin illustrate the cosmic scope of the fall?
2. What does creation's 'groaning' (Romans 8:22) teach about God's plan to redeem not just souls but all creation?
3. Where do you see innocent parties suffering consequences of others' sins, and how does this point to Christ's substitutionary atonement?

## Interlinear Text

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מָה H4100	נֶאֱנָה הַ H584	בְּהֵמָה הַ H929	נֹבֵךְ כֹּ H943	עֹדֵי י H5739	בָּקָר H1241	כִּי H3588
	groan	How do the beasts	are perplexed	the herds	of cattle	
אֵין H369	מִרְעָה H4829	בְּהֵמָה הַ H929	גַּם H1571	עֹדֵי י H5739	הַצֹּאן H6629	
	because they have no pasture			the herds	of sheep	
	נֶאֱשָׁמוּ H816					
	are made desolate					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 12:4** (Parallel theme): How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.

**Hosea 4:3** (Parallel theme): Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

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