

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL

In some Hebrew Bibles this prophecy is called “Sepher Joel”, the Book of Joel; in the Vulgate Latin version, the Prophecy of Joel; and in the Syriac version, the Prophecy of the Prophet Joel; and the Arabic version, the Prophet Joel; and so the Apostle Peter quotes him, (^{<4216>}Acts 2:16). His name, according to Hillerus ^{F1}, signifies “the Lord is God”; but others derive it from **l ay**, which in “Hiphil” is **l yawh**, and signifies “he willed, acquiesced, or is well pleased, so Abarbinei; and hence Schmidt thinks it answers to Desiderius or Erasmus. According to Isidorus ^{F2}, he was born at Bethoron, in the tribe of Reuben, and died and was buried there; and so says Pseudo-Epiphanius ^{F3}. In what age he lived is not easy to say. Aben Ezra expressly affirms there is no way to know it; and so R. David Ganz ^{F4} says, his time we know not; and likewise Abarbinel. Some think he prophesied about the same time Hoses did, after whom he is next placed; and so Mr. Whiston ^{F5} and, Mr. Bedford ^{F6} make him to prophesy much about the same time with Isaiah and Hoses, about eight hundred years before Christ; but, in the Septuagint version, this book is in the fourth order, and not Hoses, but Amos and Micah, are placed before him; and so the author of Juchasin ^{F7} puts the prophets in this order, first Hoses, then Amos, next Isaiah, then Micah, and after him Joel. Some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana relate, make Joel contemporary with Elisha, and say he prophesied in the days of Jehoram the son of Ahab, when the seven years’ famine called for came upon the land, (^{<1281>}2 Kings 8:1). Both in Seder Olam Rabba and Zuta ^{F8} he is placed in the reign of Manasseh; and so in Hilchot Gedolot, as Jarchi observes. And it seems indeed as if he prophesied after the ten tribes were carried captive, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah’s reign, since no mention is made of Israel but with respect to future times, only of Judah and Jerusalem, But, be it when it will that he prophesied, there is no doubt to be made of the authenticity of this book, which is confirmed by the quotations of two apostles out of two: Peter and Paul, (^{<4216>}Acts 2:16 ^{<5013>}Romans 10:13).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL 1

This chapter describes a dreadful calamity upon the people of the Jews, by locusts and, caterpillars, and drought. After the title of the book, (²⁰⁰¹Joel 1:1); old men are called upon to observe this sore judgment to their children, that it might be transmitted to the latest posterity, as that the like to which had not been seen and heard of, (²⁰⁰²Joel 1:2-4); and drunkards to awake and weep, because the vines were destroyed, and no wine could be made for them, (²⁰⁰³Joel 1:5-7); and not only husbandmen and vinedressers, but the priests of the Lord, are called to mourn, because such destruction, was made in the fields and vineyards, that there were no meat nor drink offering brought into the house of the Lord, (²⁰⁰⁴Joel 1:8-13); wherefore a general and solemn fast is required throughout the land, because of the distress of man and beast, (²⁰⁰⁵Joel 1:14-18); and the chapter is concluded with the resolution of the prophet to cry unto the Lord, on account of this calamity, (²⁰⁰⁶Joel 1:19,20).

Ver. 1. *The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.*] Who this Pethuel was is not known; Jarchi takes him to be the same with Samuel the prophet, who had a son of this name, (²⁰⁰⁷1 Samuel 8:2); and gives this reason for his being called Pethuel, because in his prayer he persuaded God; but the long span of time will by no means admit of this, nor the character of Samuel's son agree with Joel; and therefore is rightly denied by Aben Ezra, who observes, however, that this man was an honourable man, and therefore his name is mentioned; and gives this as a rule, that whenever any prophet mentions the name of his father, he was honourable. Perhaps, it is here observed, to distinguish him from another of the same name; and there was one of this name, Joel, a high priest in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, according to Seder Olam Zuta ^{F9} and Abarbinel ^{F10}; in whose time Joel is by some thought to prophesy.

Ver. 2. *Hear this, ye old men,* etc.] What the prophet was about to relate, concerning the consumption of the fruits of the earth, by various sorts of creatures, and by a drought; and these are called upon to declare if ever the like had been known or heard of by them; who by reason of age had the

greatest opportunities of knowledge of this sort, and could remember what they had heard or seen, and would faithfully relate it: this maybe understood of elders in office, as well as in age;

and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land; or “earth”, not of the whole earth; but of the land of Judea; who were more particularly concerned in this affair, and therefore are required to listen attentively to it:

hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? that is, not the selfsame thing, but anything equal to it; a judgment of the same kind and nature, and of the same degree. By this question it seems the like had never been in the memory of any man living; nor in former times, in the days of their ancestors, as could be averted upon report; or attested on the credit of annals, chronicles, or other methods of conveying the history of ages past. As for the plague of locusts in Egypt, though they were such as; never find been, nor would be there any more; yet such or greater, and more in number than those, might be in Judea; besides, they continued but a few, lays at most, these four years successively, as Kimchi observes; and who thinks that in Egypt there was but one sort of locusts, here four; but the passage he quotes in (⁴⁷⁸⁶Psalm 78:46); contradicts him; to which may be added (⁴⁹⁵⁴Psalm 105:34).

Ver. 3. *Tell ye your children of it*, etc.] Give them a particular account of it; describe the creatures and their number as near as you can; say when they begun and how long they continued, and what devastations they made, and what was the cause and reason of such a judgment, your sins and transgressions:

and [let] your children [tell] their children, and their children other generation; or, “to the generation following”^{F11}; let it be handed down from one generation to another that it may be a caution to future posterity how they behave and lest they bring down the like awful judgments on them. What this referred to was as follows:

Ver. 4. *That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten*, etc.] These, with the two following, are four kinds of, locusts as Jarchi observes; though it is difficult to fix the particular species designed; they seem to have their names from some peculiar properties belonging to them; as the first of these from their sheering or cropping off the fruits and leaves of trees; and the second from the vast increase of them, the multitude they bring forth and the large numbers they appear in:

and that which the locust hath left hath the canker worm eaten; which in the Hebrew language is called from its licking up the fruits of the earth, by which it becomes barren:

and that which the canker worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten; which has its name from wasting and consuming all that comes in its way: now these came not together, but followed one another; not one one year, and another the second, and so on throughout four years, as Kimchi thinks; for though the calamity lasted some years as is manifest from (³⁰²⁵ Joel 2:25); yet it is not reasonable, that, for instance what the palmer worm left the first year should remain in the fields and vineyards, on the fig trees and vines till the next year for the locust to consume and is on.; but rather these all appeared in succession in one and the same year; and so what the palmer worm left having eaten up what was most agreeable to them, the locust came and devoured what they had left; and then what they left was destroyed by the canker worm, which fed on that which was most grateful to them; and last of all came the caterpillar, and consumed all the others had left; and this might be continued for years successively: when this calamity was, we have no account in sacred history; whether it was in the seven years' famine in the days of Elisha, or the same with what Amos speaks of, (³⁰⁰⁶ Amos 4:6-9); is not easy to say: and though it seems to be literally understood, as the drought later mentioned, yet might be typical of the enemies of the Jews succeeding one another in the destruction of them. Not of the four monarchies, the Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, and Romans, as Lyra and Abarbinel; since the Persians particularly never entered into the land of Judea and wasted it; though this is the sense of the ancient Jews, as Jerom relates; for he says the Hebrews interpret the "palmer worm" of the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Chaldeans, who, coming from one climate of the world, destroyed both the ten and the two tribes, that is, all the people of Israel: the locust they interpret of the Medes and Persians, who, having overturned the Chaldean empire, carried the Jews captive: the "canker worm" is the Macedonians, and all the successors of Alexander; especially King Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, who like a canker worm sat in Judea, and devoured all the remains of the former kings, under whom were the wars of the Maccabees: the "caterpillar" they refer to the Roman empire, the fourth and last that oppressed the Jews, and drove them out of their borders. Nor of the several kings of Assyria and Babylon, who followed one another, and wasted first the ten tribes, and then the other two, as Tiglathpileser,

Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar, so Theodoret; since this prophecy only relates to the two tribes. Rather therefore this may point at the several invasions and incursions of the Chaldean army into Judea, under Nebuchadnezzar and his generals; first, when he came up against Jerusalem, and made Jehoiakim tributary to him; a second time, when he carried Jehoiachin and his family into Babylon, with a multitude of the Jews, and their wealth; a third time, when he besieged Jerusalem, and took it, and Zedekiah the king, and carried him captive; and a fourth time, when Nebuzaradan came and burnt the temple, and the houses of Jerusalem, and broke down the walls of it, and cleared the land of its inhabitants and riches; see (⁴²⁴⁰2 Kings 24:1-25:30).

Ver. 5. *Awake, ye drunkards, and weep: and howl, all ye drinkers of wine,* etc.] Who are used to neither, either to awake or to howl, being very prone to drowsiness upon their drinking bouts, and to mirth and jollity in them; but now should be awake, and sober enough, not as being a virtue in them, but through want of wine; and for the same reason should howl, as follows:

because of the new wine, for it is cut off from your mouth; the locusts having spoiled the vines and eaten the grapes, no new wine could be made, and so none could be brought in cups to their mouths; nor they drink it in bowls, as they had used to do; and which, being sweet and grateful to their taste, they were wont to drink in great abundance, till they were inebriated with it; but now there was a scarcity, their lips were dry, but not their eyes. The word, Kimchi says, signifies all liquor which is squeezed by bruising or treading.

Ver. 6. *For a nation is come up upon my land,* etc.] A nation of locusts, so called from their great numbers, and coming from foreign parts; just as the ants are called a “people”, and the conies a “folk”, (⁴¹⁸⁵Proverbs 30:25,26); and which were an emblem of the nation of the Chaldeans, which came up from Babylon, and invaded the land of Judea; called by the Lord “my land”, because he had chosen it for the habitation of his people; here he himself had long dwelt, and had been served and worshipped in it: though Kimchi thinks these are the words of the inhabitants of the land, or of the prophet; but if it can be thought they are any other than the words of God, they rather seem to be expressed by the drunkards in particular, howling for want of wine, and observing the reason of it:

strong, and without number; this description seems better to agree with the Assyrians or Chaldeans, who were a mighty and powerful people, as well

as numerous; though locusts, notwithstanding they are weak, singly taken, yet, coming in large bodies, carry all before them, and there is no stopping them:

whose teeth [are] the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion; or “the grinders”^{F12} of such an one; being hard, strong, and sharp, to bite off the tops, boughs, and branches of trees: Pliny^{F13} says, locusts will gnaw with their teeth the doors of houses; so the teeth of locusts are described in (ⲉⲃⲟⲩ Revelation 9:8); this may denote the strength, cruelty, and voraciousness of the Chaldean army.

Ver. 7. *He hath laid my vine waste,* etc.] That is, the locust, which spoiled the vines in Judea, the singular being put for the plural, by gnawing the branches, biting the tops of them, and devouring the leaves and the fruit; and so not only left them bare and barren, but destroyed them: this may emblematically represent the Assyrians or Babylonians wasting the land of Judea, the vine and vineyard of the Lord of hosts; (see ⲉⲓⲁⲓⲁ Isaiah 5:1-5);

and barked my fig tree; gnawed off the bark of them; locusts are not only harmful to vines, as is hinted by Theocritus^{F14}, but to fig trees also: Pliny^{F15} speaks of fig trees in Boeotia gnawed by locusts, which budded again; and mentions it as something wonderful and miraculous that they should: and yet Sanctius observes, that these words cannot be understood properly of the locusts, since fig trees cannot be harmed by the bite or touch of them; which, besides their roughness, have an insipid bitter juice, which preserves them from being gnawed by such creatures; and the like is observed of the cypress by Vitruvius^{F16}; but the passage out of Pliny shows the contrary. Some interpret it of a from or scum they left upon the fig tree when they gnawed it, such as Aben Ezra says is upon the face of the water; and something like this is left by caterpillars on the leaves of trees, which destroy them;

he hath made it clean bare; stripped it of its leaves and fruit, and bark also:

and cast [it] away; having got out all the juice they could:

the branches thereof are made white; the bark being gnawed off, and all the greenness and verdure of them dried up; so trees look, when this is their case: and thus the Jews were stripped by the Chaldeans of all their wealth and treasure, and were left bare and naked, and as the scum and offscouring of all things.

Ver. 8. *Lament like a virgin*, etc.] This is not the continuation of the prophet's speech to the drunkards; but, as Aben Ezra observes, he either speaks to himself, or to the land the Targum supplies it, O congregation of Israel; the more religious and godly part of the people are here addressed; who were concerned for the pure worship of God, and were as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, though not yet come, and for whom they were waiting; these are called upon to lament the calamities of the times in doleful strains, like a virgin:

girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth; either as one that had been betrothed to a young man, but not married, he dying after the espousals, and before marriage; which must be greatly distressing to one that passionately loved him; and therefore, instead of her nuptial robes, prepared to meet him and be married in, girds herself with sackcloth; a coarse hairy sort of cloth, as was usual, in the eastern countries, to put on in token of mourning: or as one lately married to a young man she dearly loved, and was excessively fond of, and lived extremely happy with; but, being suddenly snatched away from her by death, puts on her widow's garments, and mourns not in show only, but in reality; having lost in her youth her young husband, she had the strongest affection for: this is used to express the great lamentation the people are called unto in this time of their distress.

Ver. 9. *The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord*, etc.] The meat offering was made of fine flour, oil, and frankincense; and the drink offering was of wine; and, because of the want of corn and wine, these were not brought to the temple as usual; and which was matter of great grief to religious persons, and especially to the priests, as follows:

the priests, the Lord's ministers, mourn; partly because they had no work to do, and could not answer to their character, the ministers of the Lord, in ministering about holy things, and bringing the sacrifices and offerings of the people to him; and partly because of their want of food, their livelihood greatly depending on the offerings brought, part of which belonged to them, and on which they and their families lived.

Ver. 10. *The field is wasted*, etc.] By the locust, that eat up all green things, the grass and herbs, the fruit and leaves of trees; and also by the Chaldeans trampling on it with their horses, and the increase of which became fodder for them:

the land mourneth; being destitute, nothing growing upon it, and so looked dismally, and of a horrid aspect; or the inhabitants of it, for want of provision:

for the corn is wasted; by the locusts, and so by the Assyrian or Chaldean army, before it came to perfection:

the new wine is dried up: in the grape, through the drought after mentioned: or, “is ashamed”^{F17}; not answering the expectations of men, who saw it in the cluster, promising much, but failed:

the oil languisheth; or “sickens”^{F18}; the olive trees withered; the olives fell off, as the Targum, and so the oil failed: the corn, wine, and oil, are particularly mentioned, not only as being the chief support of human life, as Kimchi observes, and so the loss of them must be matter of lamentation to the people in general; but because of these the meat and drink offerings were, and therefore the priests in particular had reason to mourn.

Ver. 11. *Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen*, etc.] Tillers of the land, who have took a great deal of pains in cultivating the earth, dunging, ploughing, and sowing it; confusion may cover you, because of your disappointment, the increase not answering to your expectations and labours:

howl, O ye vinedressers; that worked in the vineyards, set the vines, watered and pruned them, and, when they had done all they could to them, were dried up with the drought, or devoured by the locusts, as they were destroyed by the Assyrians or Chaldeans; and therefore had reason to howl and lament, all their labour being lost:

for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest of the field is perished; this belongs to the husbandmen, is a reason for their shame and blushing, because the wheat and barley were destroyed before they were ripe; and so they had neither wheat nor barley harvest. The words, by a transposition, would read better, and the sense be clearer, “thus, be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen, for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest”, etc. “howl, O ye vine dressers”; for what follows:

Ver. 12. *The vine is dried up*, etc.] Withered away, stripped of its leaves and fruits, and its sap and moisture gone: or, “is ashamed”^{F19}; to see itself in this condition, and not answer the expectation of its proprietor and dresser:

and the fig tree languisheth; sickens and dies, through the bite of the locusts:

the pomegranate tree: whose fruit is delicious, and of which wine was made: the palm tree also; which bears dates:

and the apple tree; that looks so beautiful, when either in bloom, or laden with fruit, and whose fruit is very grateful to the palate; so that both what were for common use and necessary food, and what were for delight and pleasure, were destroyed by these noisome creatures:

[even] all the trees of the field are withered; for locusts not only devour the leaves and fruits of trees, but hurt the trees themselves; burn them up by touching them, and cause them to wither away and die, both by the saliva and dung, which they leave upon them, as Bochart, from various authors, has proved:

because joy is withered away from the sons of men; this is not given as a reason of the above trees dried up and withered, but of the lamentation of the vinedressers and husbandmen: or else the particle *yk* is merely expletive, or may be rendered, “therefore”, or “truly”, or “surely”^{F20}, “joy is withered”, or “ashamed”; it blushes to appear, as it used to do at the time of harvest; but now there was no harvest, and so no joy expressed, as usually was at such times; (see ^{200B}Isaiah 9:3).

Ver. 13. *Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests*, etc.] Prepare and be ready to raise up lamentation and mourning; or gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn in that, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply the words; (see ^{200B}Jeremiah 4:8);

howl, ye ministers of the altar; who served there, by laying on and burning the sacrifices, or offering incense:

come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God; that is, come into the house of the Lord, as Kimchi; into the court of the priests, and there lie all night, in the sackcloth girded with; putting up prayers to God, with weeping and lamentations, that he would avert the judgments that were come or were coming upon them:

for the meat offering and the drink offering are withholden from the house of your God; (see Gill on ^{200B}Joel 1:9”).

Ver. 14. *Sanctify yea a fast*, etc.] This is spoken to the priests, whose business it was to appoint a fast, as the Targum renders it; or to set apart a time for such religious service, as the word signifies; and to keep it holy themselves, and see that it was so kept by others: Kimchi interprets it, prepare the people for a fast; give them notice of it, that they may be prepared for it:

call a solemn assembly; of all the people of the land later mentioned: or, “proclaim a restraint”^{F21}; a time of ceasing, as a fast day should be from all servile work, that attendance may be given to the duties of it, prayer and humiliation:

gather the elders: meaning not those in age, but in office:

[*and*] *all the inhabitants of the land*; not the magistrates only, though first and principally, as examples, who had been deeply concerned in guilt; but the common people also, even all of them:

[*into*] *the house of the Lord your God*; the temple, the court of the Israelites, where they were to go and supplicate the Lord, when such a calamity as this of locusts and caterpillars were upon them; and where they might hope the Lord would hear them, and remove his judgments from them, (^{<1087>}1 Kings 8:37);

and cry unto the Lord; in prayer, with vehemence and earnestness of soul.

Ver. 15. *Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord [is] at hand*, etc.] A time of severer and heavier judgments than these of the locusts, caterpillars, etc. which were a presage and emblem of greater ones, even of the total destruction of their city, temple, and nation, either by the Chaldeans, or by the Romans, or both:

and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come; unawares, suddenly, and irresistibly: there is in the Hebrew text an elegant play on words, which may be rendered, as “wasting from the waster”, or “destruction from the destroyer, shall it come”^{F22}; even from the almighty God, who is able to save and destroy, and none can deliver out of his hands; (see ^{<2336>}Isaiah 13:6); the word signifies one powerful and victorious, as Aben Ezra observes; and so it does in the Arabic language.

Ver. 16. *Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?* etc.] Such an interrogation most strongly affirms; it was a matter out of all question, they

could not but see it with their eyes; it was a plain case, and not to be denied, that every eatable thing, or that of which food was wont to be made, was cut off by the locusts, or the drought, or by the Assyrian or Chaldean army:

[yea], joy and gladness from the house of our God; the harvest being perished, there were no firstfruits brought to the temple, which used to be attended with great joy; and the corn and vines being wasted, no meat offerings made of fine flour, nor drink offerings of wine, were offered, which used to make glad God and man; nor any other sacrifices, on which the priests and their families lived, and were matter of joy to them; and these they ate of in the temple, or in courts adjoining to it. So Philo^{F23} the Jew says of the ancient Jews, that

“having prayed and offered sacrifices, and appeased the Deity, they washed their bodies and souls; the one in lavers, the other in the streams of the laws, and right instruction; and being cheerful, turned themselves to their food, not going home oftentimes, but remaining in the holy places where they sacrificed; and as mindful of the sacrifices, and reverencing the place, they kept a feast truly holy, not shining either in word or deed.”

Ver. 17. *The seed is rotten under their clods,* etc.] Or “grains”^{F24} of wheat or barley, which had been sown, and, for want of rain, putrefied and wasted away under the clods of earth, through the great drought; so that what with locusts, which cropped that that did bud forth, and with the drought, by reason of which much of the seed sown came to nothing, an extreme famine ensued: the Targum is,

“casks of wine rotted under their coverings:”

the garners are desolate; the “treasuries”^{F25}, or storehouses, having nothing in them, and there being nothing to put into them; Jarchi makes these to be peculiar for wine and oil, both which failed, (²⁰¹⁰ Joel 1:10);

the barns are broken down; in which the wheat and barley had used to be laid up; but this judgment of the locusts and drought continuing year after year, the walls fell down, and, no care was taken to repair them, there being no use for them; these were the granaries, and, as Jarchi, for wheat particularly:

for the corn is withered; that which sprung up withered and dried away, through the heat and drought: or was “ashamed”^{F26}; not answering the expectation of the sower.

Ver. 18. *How do the beasts groan?* etc.] For want of fodder, all green grass and herbs being eaten up by the locusts; or devoured, or trampled upon, and destroyed, by the Chaldeans; and also for want of water to quench their thirst:

the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; the larger cattle, as oxen; these were in the utmost perplexity, not knowing where to go for food or drink:

yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate; which have shepherds to lead and direct them to pastures, and can feed on commons, where the grass is short, which other cattle cannot; yet even these were in great distress, and wasted away, and were consumed for want of nourishment.

Ver. 19. *O Lord, to thee will I cry*, etc.] Or pray, as the Targum; with great vehemency and earnestness, commiserating the case of man and beast: these are the words of the prophet, resolving to use his interest at the through of grace in this time of distress, whatever others did:

for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness; or, “of the plain”^{F27} though in the wildernesses of Judea, there were pastures for cattle: Kimchi interprets them of the shepherds’ tents or cotes, as the word^{F28} is sometimes used; which were will not to be pitched where there were pastures for their flocks: and so the Targum renders it, “the habitations of the wilderness”; these, whether pastures or habitations, or both, were destroyed by fire, the pastures by the locusts, as Kimchi; which, as Pliny^{F29} says, by touching burn the trees, herbs, and fruits of the earth; (see ~~298B~~ Joel 2:3); or by the Assyrians or Chaldeans, who by fire and sword consumed all in their way; or by a dry burning blasting wind, as Lyra; and so the Targum interprets it of a strong east wind like fire: it seems rather to design extreme heat and excessive drought, which burn up all the produce of the earth:

and the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field; which may be understood of flashes of lightning, which are common in times of great heat and drought; (see ~~388A~~ Psalm 83:14).

Ver. 20. *The beasts of the field cry also unto thee*, etc.] As well as the prophet, in their way; which may be mentioned, both as a rebuke to such who had no sense of the judgments upon them, and called not on the Lord; and to express the greatness of the calamity, of which the brute creatures were sensible, and made piteous moans, as for food, so for drink; panting thorough excessive heat and vehement thirst, as the hart, after the water brooks, of which this word is only used, (~~1941~~ Psalm 42:1); but in vain:

for the rivers of waters are dried up; not only springs, and rivulets and brooks of water, but rivers, places where were large deep waters, as Aben Ezra explains it; either by the Assyrian army, the like Sennacherib boasts (~~2375~~ Isaiah 37:25); and is said to be done by the army of Xerxes, wherever it came; or rather by the excessive heat and scorching beams of the sun, by which such effects are produced:

and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness; (see Gill on “~~2019~~ Joel 1:19”); and whereas the word rendered pastures signifies both “them” and “habitations” also; and, being repeated, it may be taken in one of the senses in (~~2019~~ Joel 1:19); and in the other here: and so Kimchi who interprets it before of “tents”, here explains it of grassy places in the wilderness, dried up, as if the sun had consumed them.