

Lesson 21

Joel 2:20, Continued

Joel 2:20 – “I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things.

Last week we looked at the word “northerner” in verse 20, and we saw how that word makes no sense as a description of a locust invasion, but how it makes perfect sense as a description of a human invasion.

But we ended with a question: **why wasn't Joel more specific?**

Other prophets had no problem calling out Babylon by name – why didn't God do that through Joel if, in fact, this northern invasion is from Babylon? Why not say Babylon? Or if the invasion was from Assyria, why not say Assyria?

And, if the text had been specific, would there have been a better place to do that than right here in verse 20? Couldn't God have said, “I will remove the Babylonians far from you!” Why instead say, “I will

remove the northerner far from you"? Why the continued vagueness?

I think that perhaps we can answer that question with two words: Gog and Magog.

Who or what are Gog and Magog?

We first meet Gog of the land of Magog in the book of Ezekiel.

The Handout for Lesson 21 shows the text of Ezekiel 38–39, with some verses highlighted. All of the text is interesting, of course, but for our purposes here, the yellow highlighted text is really interesting – and the green highlighted text is really, really interesting!

Ezekiel 38:2–3 – Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.

But, after reading about Gog of Magog in Ezekiel 38–39, we are very likely surprised by something – we are surprised that we don't read about Gog of Magog earlier in the Bible. Why is that surprising? Because, in verse 17 of Ezekiel 38, God says this about Gog of Magog:

Ezekiel 38:17 – Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the **prophets** of Israel, who in those days **prophesied for years that I would bring you against them?**

Where are any such earlier prophecies found anywhere in the Bible?

A quick word search turns up a son of Japheth named Magog (a person – not a place!) in Genesis 10:2, and a son of Shemaiah named Gog in 1 Chronicles 5:4 – but there is no prophecy about either one of them prior to what we find in Ezekiel. Their only relation with Gog of Magog appears to be names they share.

If Gog of Magog is never mentioned in the Bible prior to Ezekiel 38, then how can it be true that Gog of Magog was spoken about in old time by the prophets (plural!) of Israel, as Ezekiel 38:17 very plainly tells us? **“The prophets of Israel ... prophesied for years that I would bring you against them.”** How can that be true when we are unable to find a single example of such a prophecy?

The only solution to that puzzle is to recognize that there is no literal Gog of Magog. There is no literal king named Gog, and there is no literal kingdom of Magog. The solution is to understand that Gog is a symbolic and figurative king of a symbolic and figurative kingdom of Magog – and that God is walking Gog of Magog out onto the stage in Ezekiel 38–39 to teach the people a lesson.

But how does that solve our problem about the lack of any Gog or Magog prophecies? Simple. While there is no earlier prophecy that mentions Gog by name, there are many earlier prophecies from many earlier prophets that foretell of various earthly enemies of God’s people being defeated by God. And each of those earlier prophecies – whether against Egypt or against Edom or against Assyria or against Babylon or against someplace else – is an example of a prophecy about this figurative Gog of Magog.

In short, I think what we must conclude here is that **Gog of Magog figuratively depicts whoever happens to be the current enemy of God's people.** Gog of Magog is God's name for the enemy *du jour*!

I think that is exactly how Gog of Magog is used in Ezekiel 38-39, and I think that is how Gog of Magog is used later in Revelation 20, where we meet him once again – not in the context of Babylon, but in the context of Rome (which is disparagingly referred to as Babylon a number of times in the New Testament).

Revelation 20:7-8 – And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

But how do we know all of that for sure? How do we know for sure that Gog of Magog is not a real king from a real land?

One way we know that for sure is by looking for someone named Gog from some kingdom named Magog during the days of Ezekiel or afterward. We will not find either one! If there was someone named Gog from some land of Magog who was able to do all that is described in Ezekiel, then there would be some record of him – but there isn't.

That is one reason, but I think we can also know that Gog was not a real person by looking at the context of Ezekiel 38 where Gog of Magog is first introduced to us.

What had God just told the people? Let's back up a few verses.

Ezekiel 37:24-27 – **My servant David shall be king over them**, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and **David my servant shall be their prince forever**. I will make a covenant of peace with them. **It shall be an everlasting covenant with them**. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

In short, God had just promised them an eternal kingdom that would be based on an everlasting covenant.

And how did the people respond to that great promise?

I suspect they responded by saying:

"So what? First there had been Egyptian slavery, and then the Philistines had attacked us, and then the Assyrians, and now the Babylonians. Who is next? What guarantee do we have that the same thing that happened before won't happen to this so-called eternal kingdom? How can we have any hope in what you are promising us given all that has happened to us?"

Isn't that the same attitude that we see earlier in Ezekiel 37 with the valley of the dry bones?

Ezekiel 37:11-14 – Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of

Israel. **Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.'** Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. **And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live,** and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.'

I think the people were saying to God, "Eternal kingdom? Everlasting covenant? Ha! Nothing we do will ever work – and nothing you do for us will ever last."

And so what did God need to tell them in response through the prophet Ezekiel? God needed to convince the Jews that under the Messiah their glory would be secure. They needed to understand that their kingdom would be restored and would be eternal.

And how does God do that through Ezekiel? God does that with this great symbolic battle with the figurative Gog from the figurative land of Magog. In short, God shows the people that their security was assured because they would be able to defeat **any** enemy with the Messiah fighting for them.

Instead of saying to the people, "I defeated the Egyptians for you, I defeated the Philistines for you, I

defeated the Assyrians for you, I defeated the Babylonians for you,” and on and on and on, God instead just wraps all of those great earthly enemies up into a single package along with any future such earthlu enemies and calls that entire package “Gog of Magog.”

And can’t we see that – or rather hear that – in the name itself? Gog of Magog? Doesn’t that sound a bit like “Stan from Iran” or “Jack from Iraq”? Can’t we hear some wordplay there?

I think the message here is that the **name** of the enemy is irrelevant. The **location** of the enemy is irrelevant. The **size** of the enemy is irrelevant. The **power** of the enemy is irrelevant. The **track record** of the enemy is irrelevant. None of that matters at all. **No one can stand against God! No one can defeat Christ! No one can overcome the kingdom of Christ!**

I think Paul sums up the message of Gog of Magog very nicely for us.

Romans 8:31 – If God is for us, who can be against us?

Let’s all think of the worst enemy that we can imagine – the most powerful, the most relentless, the most ruthless, the most terrifying, and the most horrific. And then let’s call that terrible enemy Gog from the land of Magog. No matter what we imagined, God will defeat that enemy. No matter what we imagined, the church will win. Far from such an enemy actually existing, we cannot even imagine an earthly enemy that could ever defeat the kingdom of Christ!

Yes, Egypt was powerful, but Egypt was not the eternal kingdom of Christ! Yes, Assyria was powerful, but Assyria was not the eternal kingdom of Christ! Yes, Babylon was powerful, but Babylon was not the eternal kingdom of Christ! Yes, Rome was powerful, but Rome was not the eternal kingdom of Christ! And we could add many others such as the Soviet Union and China or even the United States. There has never been and there will never be any earthly kingdom that can defeat the eternal kingdom of Christ!

And if Egypt failed, and if Assyria failed, and if Babylon failed, and if Rome failed – then doesn't that show us that all such attempts will fail? I think that is God's point with Gog of Magog in both Ezekiel and in Revelation. No matter the earthly enemy, God will defeat that enemy. No matter the earthly enemy, the church will prevail over that enemy and will outlast that enemy.

There is but one eternal kingdom! And that one eternal kingdom is not man-made! Daniel 2:34 tells us that.

And who is Gog today? Where is Magog today? What is our great enemy today? What are the earthly forces today that are arrayed against us on our northern border?

Whatever it is, God will deliver us from that great enemy if we remain faithful to God and refuse to compromise with this world.

And, yes, Gog's army is huge. In Ezekiel 39:12, we see that Gog's army was so large that it took seven months to bury them all! In Revelation 20:8, we are told that his number is "as the sand of the sea."

The whole earth could be arrayed against us – and often it seems that such is the case! But the message here is that no matter how big or how powerful the enemy, that enemy will not win. God will defeat them. We win! The faithful people of God always win!

And is that because we are so powerful? Not at all. We win because God is so powerful. And we share in that victory because of our faith in God and our faithfulness to God.

1 John 5:4 – For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.

Let's now get back to our question about Joel 2:20. How do Gog and Magog (who, by the way, are not mentioned anywhere by name in Joel!) answer our question about why God was not more specific here in verse 20?

I think the answer is this: **no matter who is invading from the north, God will remove that enemy far away from his faithful people.**

That is God's great promise, and it is a great promise that extends far beyond the immediate concerns of Joel's listeners. It is a great promise that extends all the way to the church, the eternal kingdom of Christ, which we know Joel is about to discuss in this same second chapter.

In my opinion, that is why the text is not more specific. I think that is why we don't see Babylon or Assyria mentioned by name anywhere in Joel. I think that is what we have had so much trouble dating the book of Joel.

We asked all of those questions back in our introduction to Joel, and now, 21 lessons later, I think we have found the answers!

I think that is why the word “northerner” is used in verse 20. After all, from what direction did Gog of Magog approach? Look at those green highlights on your handout!

- (38:6) from the uttermost parts of the north.
- (38:15) out of the uttermost parts of the north.
- (39:2) from the uttermost parts of the north.

Gog of Magog came from the north! And as the faithful people of God on this earth, we can be certain that there will always be a terrible enemy coming against us from the north!

But no matter how terrible the enemy, we can also be certain that God both can and will defeat that enemy for us. All of the kingdoms of this world will crumble to dust before the kingdom of Christ. That was true in the days of Daniel, and that is true in our own day as well.

Gog of Magog will do no better today than he did in the days of Ezekiel when Babylon was playing the part of Gog or in the days of Revelation when Rome was playing the part of Gog. The actors may change, but the script does not. God always wins! The faithful people of God always win! Faith is always the victory!

And if there is any doubt about the relation between Joel and Ezekiel 38–39, just look again at the green highlights on the Handout for Lesson 21.

- In 38:4, we see a great army.
- In 38:6, we see that the great army is from the north.
- In 38:18–19 and 39:8,13, we see a day of the Lord.
- In 39:11, we see a valley. (We will see three valleys in Joel 3.)
- In 39:28, we see God's salvation of his people.
- In 39:29, we see God pouring out his Spirit.

And keep in mind that if the pre-exile view about when Joel was written is the correct view, then Joel and Ezekiel are both focused on the Babylonian invasion – with Joel looking at that invasion before it happened and Ezekiel looking at that invasion after it happened.

And those who reject the early view and the pre-exile view often point as evidence to the fact that Joel mentions neither Assyria nor Babylon by name – but perhaps we have now figured out why neither of those great powers is named in this book.

I think God wants the people to focus on him rather than on whatever great enemy happens to be the current threat. **The enemies change; God does not.** And I think that is also a good lesson for us today as well.

Now let's look at the remainder of Joel 2:20.

I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things.

As we just saw, I think this “northerner” has both a specific meaning and a general meaning.

Specifically, I think this northern invasion force was the army that was coming and that was near, which under the pre-exile view would have been Babylon.

But, generally, I think this northern invasion force is any invading army that might ever come for the people of God. None of them will ever be successful in defeating the faithful people of God.

And keep in mind that these verses are assuming that the people have repented – that these people were in fact the faithful people of God. These verses are telling us what God would do if the people turned back to him.

Verse 20 continues with that description: God would also “drive him [the northerner] into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea.”

The Hebrew word translated “drive him” is used elsewhere in the Bible to describe driving a people out of their land into exile.

Deuteronomy 30:1 – And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has **driven** you.

But usually it is Israel that is being driven away. In fact, in Jeremiah 16, we see that Israel was driven away to the north country.

Jeremiah 16:15 – ...As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the **north** country and out of all the countries where he had **driven** them...

But here in verse 20, it is the northerners who are being driven out. What we are seeing here is a great reversal. The enemies of God's people would experience the same sort of exile that they had inflicted or had threatened to inflict on God's people.

And to where would those enemies be driven? They would be driven to "a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea."

I think we are seeing the four cardinal directions in this verse. We certainly see the north, the east, and the west. But I think we are also seeing the south with that reference to "a parched and desolate land" where those in the north would be driven. That parched and desolate land is likely the Negeb desert in the south.

What does it tell us if verse 20 mentions (either directly or indirectly) all four cardinal directions?

On one level, the message is simple – this northern force would be scattered the same way a bug is scattered when I step on it! They would be scattered in all directions under God's foot!

But I think there may be a deeper meaning as well. And this deeper level would offer some confirmation for what we said earlier about Gog of Magog.

Say what you will about Gog of Magog, one thing is certain: his army is a human army. Gog is a human who is shaking his fist at God and trying to overcome the people of God with his earthly army and his earthly kingdom. But, as we know, no earthly force can ever overcome the faithful people of God.

I think we may be seeing that fact *figuratively* in verse 20 with these four cardinal direction.

The number four is often used figuratively in the Bible to represent things of worldly or earthly origin, especially when contrasted with things of heavenly origin.

This symbolism of the number four comes from the natural occurrences of four in the created world, such as the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, west), the four seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter), and the four basic elements (earth, air, fire, water). Today we might also add our own DNA, which consists of four chemical bases.

We often see the number four used that way in the Bible:

- In Daniel 7:3, the four great beasts represent four earthly kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome).
- In Zechariah 1:18, four horns represent the earthly powers arrayed against God's people.

- In Zechariah 6:1, four chariots are sent out by God to show His dominion and power over the earth.
- In Revelation 9:13, four horns are shown as a reminder that the kingdoms of this earth are all under God's sovereign rule.
- In Revelation 5:12-13, when **heaven** praises Christ, it does so with a seven-fold blessing, but when the **earth** praises Christ, it does so with a four-fold blessing.

And here in Joel 2:20? Here we see a great northern army arrayed against the people of God, but who are driven out by God in all four directions! No earthly force can stand against the kingdom of Christ!

And, next, verse 20 says: **“the stench and foul smell of him [this northerner] will rise.”**

Apparently, dead locusts smell really really bad, and so this part of verse 20 is very often cited as evidence of a locust invasion in Joel 2.

But for that argument to make any sense we would first have to show that dead locusts are the **only** thing that smells really really bad – and, of course, they are not. Dead humans also smell really bad, as the Bible reminds us elsewhere.

Isaiah 34:3 – Their slain shall be cast out,
and the stench of their corpses shall rise; the
mountains shall flow with their blood.

Again, I don't think we are seeing locusts here – or smelling locusts here to be more precise. Instead, I think we are both seeing and smelling the dead bodies

of the human northern invaders who have been removed by God so that they could not harm God's faithful people.

Finally, in verse 20 we read: **"for he has done great things."**

Who is "he"? And what are these "great things" that "he" has done?

The Hebrew phrase "he has done great things" is ambiguous. It can be understood in either a good sense or a bad sense.

For the bad sense, the phrase could be translated to say that "he has acted with arrogance." For the good sense, the phrase could be translated just as it is in the ESV: "he has done great things."

So which is it? Good or bad? I think the answer is yes! I think the bad sense is used here in verse 20, but I think we will see the good sense used in the next verse.

And I think that ambiguity is intentional. I think the lesson is clear – this northern force was acting like they were in charge! They were acting like they were God.

Yes, we are to follow God's example if we want to live godly lives, but that does not mean that we are to put ourselves in the place of God. Following the example of Christ is very different from acting like we are Christ. For example, Matthew 7:29 tells us that Jesus taught as one who had authority, but that must not be how we teach. We must teach using the Bible as our authority rather than using ourselves as our own authority. There

is a difference between following Jesus' footsteps and stepping into his shoes.

As so, the phrase "he has done great things" could be used both to praise God and to condemn men who act like they are God – and I think that is how the phrase is being used here in verse 20 and in the next verse. Here in verse 20 the phrase condemns those who act as if they are God, but in verse 21 the same phrase will be used to praise God.

But how did this northerner act like God? How did this northerner act with arrogance?

If this Northern force is Babylon (as is seeming more and more likely), then the Bible answers that question.

Isaiah 13:11 – I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

Isaiah 13:19 – And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

And the Bible also tells us that Babylon went too far in punishing Judah, which is why Babylon was punished so severely.

Zechariah 1:15 – And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster.

Isaiah 47:6 – I was angry with my people; I profaned my heritage; I gave them into your

hand; you showed them no mercy; on the aged
you made your yoke exceedingly heavy.

Babylon had not done these things yet – but these things were coming and were near. And God is telling the people that these things could still be prevented if they would repent and return to him.

Joel 2:21

Joel 2:21 – “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things!

As we saw in verse 20, the Northern invader acted like it was in the place of God, and that is why the phrase “he has done great things” was used in a negative sense in that verse.

But here in verse 21, the people are told to be glad and to rejoice. Why? Because God has done great things! It’s the same phrase we saw in verse 20, but here that phrase is describing God – and that phrase is also providing the reason why the people should rejoice.

We are not God. We are not in charge. And if we ever act like we are, then we should face the condemnation of verse 20.

But God is God! God is in charge! God is the King! God is the creator of the universe! And for that reason, we should all be glad and rejoice. The Lord has done great things!

And there is something else the people should do – or rather not do. Verse 21 says, **“Fear not, O land!”**

That the text is urging the land to rejoice and to not be afraid tells us that the land here is being personified. The word "land" is being used here to mean the people who lived on the land.

And why do we see that personification? Most likely it is because the focus here is on an invasion of that land and on a battle that occurs on that land.

In the Old Testament, we often find a command to fear not in the context of a battle.

Numbers 14:9 – Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; **do not fear them.**

But we also see that same command in the context of God coming to redeem and save his people.

Isaiah 40:9-10 – Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, **fear not**; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

Isaiah 43:1 – But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "**Fear not**, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

Isaiah 44:1-4 – "But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: **Fear not**, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. For I will

pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams.

Isaiah 54:4 – Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

There is something very important about these verses from Isaiah when it comes to our study of Joel, and it is this: they are addressing the same themes that we have been seeing in Joel and that we will see later in Joel. Here is how one commentary describes the similarity.

In short, the Book of Isaiah addresses many of the themes that appear in Joel, including the healing of the land, the triumph over their enemies, the end of Israel's shame among the nations, the return from exile, and the gift of the Spirit. "Do not fear" is the refrain of reassurance that runs through them all.

How many times in the Bible do we see God or an angel of God showing up to help the people of God – but first having to say, "fear not" to those people he has come to help?

Genesis 15:1 – After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "**Fear not**, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

Isaiah 41:13 – For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "**Fear not**, I am the one who helps you."

Daniel 10:12 – Then he said to me, “**Fear not**, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.

Luke 2:10 – And the angel said to them, “**Fear not**, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

And that is what we also see here in verse 21: “**Fear not**, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things!”

When God shows up, even when he shows up to save, most often the first thing God says is “fear not.” And I think that God likely has to start with that reassurance to keep the people he is addressing from fainting dead away before they can hear anything else he has to say!

But do you know what? That all changed with Jesus, didn’t it?

When Jesus came to this world, he came as a baby who grew up to be a boy and then a man. Yes, the Messiah is 100% God – but the Messiah is also 100% man.

And while I don’t think we can ever fully understand that wonderful truth about Jesus in this life, there is one thing we can understand for sure. There is one thing that we can see all throughout the gospel accounts – one thing that is very different from how God interacted with people in the Old Testament and that is truly wonderful about how Jesus interacted with people in the New Testament.

And what is that wonderful truth? It is this: **Jesus could talk to anyone without first having to announce, “Fear not!”** Whether Jesus was talking to a tax collector, or to a blind man, or to a widow, or to a leper – Jesus could do just that: talk!

Yes, Jesus “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” and “by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him” (Colossians 1:15–16).

But that same Jesus could walk up to someone on the street and talk to that person without having to first proclaim, “fear not!”

Look for a moment at the very last phrase in the book of Joel at the end of Joel 3:21 – “for the LORD dwells in Zion.”

A theme that runs all throughout the Bible is God’s desire to dwell with his people. We see that desire in Eden, and we see that desire in Exodus.

Exodus 25:8 – And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may **dwell** in their midst.

Exodus 29:45–46 – **I will dwell among the people of Israel** and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt **that I might dwell among them**. I am the LORD their God.

And we see that desire in the prophets.

Ezekiel 37:27 – **My dwelling place** shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Is that something yet to happen, or has it already happened? It has already come to pass. It happened when Jesus was here.

John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh and **dwelt among us**, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And it is still true today. God dwells with us today in the Lord's church.

Ephesians 2:19–22 – So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of **the household of God**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into **a dwelling place for God** by the Spirit.

Revelation 21:3 – And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, **the dwelling place of God is with man**. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

Jesus – who became flesh and dwelt among us – made all of that possible. "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man!"

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things!"

That is as much a message for us today as it was for the people of Joel's day! In fact, that is always a message that the faithful people of God need to hear. **Fear not! Be Glad! Rejoice! God has done great things!**