

# Acts 2:16–21

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation about Acts 2:16–21.

This was a follow-up to the previous study titled “Visions and Dreams in the New Testament.” I wanted to take some extra time to discuss Joel 2:28–32 and Acts 2:16–21.

I will share some of the scriptures in this short article.

## **Accurate paraphrase**

I believe that the apostle Peter gave an accurate paraphrase of Joel 2:28–32 in his sermon mentioned in Acts 2:16–21.

It is not technically a direct quote for the following reasons.

- In Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17, Peter flipped the order of the phrases about old men dreaming and young men seeing visions.
- In Acts 2:18, Peter added the phrase “and they shall prophesy,” which was not mentioned in Joel 2:29.
- In Acts 2:21, Peter did not repeat the part about Mount Zion and Jerusalem that was mentioned in Joel 2:32.

## **Value of Old Testament**

Peter mentioning Joel 2:28–32 is one of the many examples of people in New Testament times recognizing the significance of the writings of the Old Testament.

Here are a few more.

- John 5:45–47
- Luke 24:44–45
- Romans 15:4
- 1 Corinthians 10:11

## **General application**

Bible students should be aware that prophetic statements can have a general application, rather than a specific application. (Bible students should be careful about people who dogmatically give their specific prophecy opinions as a certainty.)

- Peter uses a prophecy from the Old Testament (Joel 2:28-32) in a sermon to explain events that he saw in his life (Acts 2)—even though some of the details did not exactly apply at that moment.
- Although you should not claim to speak for God when He has not spoken to you, it is not wrong for you to recognize truth from the past to help you appreciate miracles in the present.
- Please be careful not to attempt to squeeze or force the interpretation of a general prophecy of events into a specific event.

### **"All flesh"**

Did God pour out His Spirit on "all flesh" in Acts 2?

- Acts 2:1-36—Holy Spirit to the Jewish converts
- Acts 10:44-48—Holy Spirit to gentile converts
- Acts 2:41—3,000 people were added
- Acts 4:4—5,000 believed
- Acts 8:14-17—Laid hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit
- Understand how the phrase "all flesh" is a literary device.

### **"Day of the Lord"**

Was Joel 2:31 or Acts 2:20 the "Day of the Lord?"

- The phrase "Day of the Lord" is not necessarily a specific time frame as many religious people define it.
- The phrase "Day of the Lord" has been used in the Bible to describe when God got more involved.
- Understand how the phrase "Day of the Lord" is a literary device.

### **Prophesying, visions and dreams**

While I used this Bible study to help Bible students in their study of the Bible, I want to remind you how this topic is also a follow-up to my discussion about visions and dreams.

Peter talked about prophesying, visions and dreams.