

## Session 6 Peter Opens Joel: This Is That

*Acts: The Book That Explains Everything*

Session 6 | Acts 2:14-21



### Before You Read

**Big idea:** Acts 2:14-21 gives Peter’s first explanation of Pentecost. He does not explain the event by later Pauline mystery truth. He stands with the eleven, rejects the charge of drunkenness, and says, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.”

**How to use this guide:** Read each KJV verse first. Then mark what Peter says before deciding what later doctrine to compare.

#### Three words to keep watching

- **Peter** - He stands with the eleven and speaks as the apostolic spokesman in Jerusalem.
- **Joel** - Peter explains Pentecost from prophecy.
- **Last days** - Peter’s quotation keeps the event in Israel’s prophetic setting.

**A simple right-division reminder:** Acts 2 is before Saul’s conversion, before Paul’s apostleship, and before the revelation of the mystery of the body of Christ through Paul. Let Peter’s explanation control the passage.

### Acts 2:14

*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

#### What does the passage say?

- Peter stands up with the eleven.
- He lifts up his voice.
- He addresses men of Judaea and those dwelling at Jerusalem.
- He tells them to hearken to his words.

#### Words to notice

- **Peter** - The apostolic spokesman in this passage.

- **With the eleven** - Peter is not acting apart from the apostolic company.
- **Judaea** - The audience is still local and Jewish in setting.
- **Jerusalem** - Pentecost is being explained in the city where Jesus told them to wait.

#### Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 1:8 - Witness was to begin at Jerusalem.
- Acts 1:26 - Matthias was numbered with the eleven apostles.
- Acts 2:5 - The multitude in Jerusalem is identified as Jews, devout men.

#### Do not miss

- Peter’s first sermon in Acts is not addressed to a generic Gentile audience. Luke keeps Jerusalem, Judaea, and the eleven in view.

## Acts 2:15

*For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*

### What does the passage say?

- Peter rejects the accusation that the speakers are drunken.
- He says the mockers have supposed wrongly.
- He points to the third hour of the day.

### Words to notice

- **Not drunken** - Peter denies the mockers' explanation.
- **As ye suppose** - The accusation came from human assumption, not from the facts.

- **Third hour** - Morning, roughly the third hour after sunrise.

### Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 2:13 - Some mocked and said the men were full of new wine.
- 1 Samuel 1:12-15 - Hannah was wrongly accused of drunkenness.
- Acts 26:24-25 - Paul was later accused of madness and answered soberly.

### Do not miss

- The mockers are not reliable interpreters of Pentecost. Peter denies their charge before giving the biblical explanation.

## Acts 2:16

*But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;*

### What does the passage say?

- Peter says, "this is that."
- The event is connected to what Joel spoke.
- Peter uses prophecy to explain Pentecost.

### Words to notice

- **This is that** - Peter identifies the event with Joel's prophetic words.
- **Spoken** - Joel's prophecy had already been given.

- **Prophet Joel** - Peter's explanation is rooted in Israel's Scriptures.

### Cross-references worth marking

- Joel 2:28-32 - The prophecy Peter quotes.
- Luke 24:44-45 - The risen Lord opened the Scriptures to the apostles.
- Acts 3:18-21 - Peter again speaks in prophetic terms to Israel.

### Do not miss

- Peter does not say, "This is the mystery body of Christ." He says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."

## Acts 2:17

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:*

### What does the passage say?

- The quoted prophecy concerns the last days.
- God says He will pour out of His Spirit.
- Sons and daughters shall prophesy.
- Young men shall see visions.

- Old men shall dream dreams.

### Words to notice

- **Last days** - Prophetic timing language.
- **Pour out** - God is the one acting.
- **My Spirit** - The outpouring belongs to God.
- **Prophecy** - Spirit-given speech is central in the prophecy.

### Cross-references worth marking

- Joel 2:28 - The source of Peter's quotation.
- Numbers 11:29 - Moses wished that all the LORD's people were prophets.
- Acts 2:4 - They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance.

## Do not miss

- Peter's quotation keeps Pentecost in the prophetic set-

ting. Do not detach the Spirit's coming from the words Peter quotes.

## Acts 2:18

*And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*

### What does the passage say?

- God says He will pour out of His Spirit on servants and handmaidens.
- The result is that they shall prophesy.
- This continues the prophecy from the previous verse.

### Words to notice

- **Servants** - Those belonging to the Lord's service.
- **Handmaidens** - Female servants are included in the

prophetic outpouring.

- **In those days** - The prophecy has a time setting.
- **They shall prophesy** - The point is Spirit-enabled prophetic speech.

### Cross-references worth marking

- Joel 2:29 - The source of Peter's quotation.
- Luke 2:36-38 - Anna is a prophetess in Israel.
- Acts 21:9 - Philip's daughters later prophesy.

### Do not miss

- Peter is quoting prophecy. Do not rush the verse into modern office debates before seeing what Peter is doing in Acts 2.

## Acts 2:19

*And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:*

### What does the passage say?

- God will show wonders in heaven above.
- He will show signs in the earth beneath.
- Blood, fire, and vapour of smoke are named.

### Words to notice

- **Wonders** - Astonishing signs from God.
- **Heaven above** - The prophecy reaches beyond the room at Pentecost.
- **Earth beneath** - The prophecy also includes earthly

signs.

- **Blood, fire, and vapour of smoke** - Serious prophetic imagery.

### Cross-references worth marking

- Joel 2:30 - The source of Peter's quotation.
- Exodus 7:17 - Blood appears as a sign in God's dealings with Egypt.
- Revelation 6:12 - Cosmic signs appear in day-of-the-Lord judgment context.

### Do not miss

- Peter quotes more than the Spirit-outpouring lines. The Joel passage includes judgment and day-of-the-Lord signs too.

## Acts 2:20

*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:*

### What does the passage say?

- The sun shall be turned into darkness.
- The moon shall be turned into blood.
- These signs come before the great and notable day of the Lord.

### Words to notice

- **Sun** and **moon** - Cosmic signs are part of the prophecy.
- **Before** - The signs are connected to what comes after them.

- **Day of the Lord** - A major prophetic theme.
- **Great and notable** - The day is weighty and publicly significant.

### Cross-references worth marking

- Joel 2:31 - The source of Peter's quotation.
- Isaiah 13:9-10 - Day-of-the-Lord language with darkened heavenly bodies.
- Matthew 24:29 - Sun and moon signs in the Lord's prophetic discourse.

### Do not miss

- Do not pretend every detail in this verse visibly happened that morning in Acts 2. Peter is placing Pentecost within Joel's prophetic framework.

## Acts 2:21

*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

### What does the passage say?

- The prophecy includes a salvation promise.
- Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- This closes Peter's quotation from Joel.

### Words to notice

- **Whosoever** - The promise is broad.
- **Call** - The response is directed to the Lord.

- **Name of the Lord** - Salvation is tied to the Lord's revealed name and authority.
- **Saved** - Deliverance is promised.

### Cross-references worth marking

- Joel 2:32 - The source of Peter's quotation.
- Acts 2:36 - Peter identifies the crucified Jesus as both Lord and Christ.
- Romans 10:13 - Paul later quotes the same verse.

### Do not miss

- Peter will immediately preach Jesus as the one Israel must reckon with. Do not separate the promise of verse 21 from Peter's sermon about the crucified, risen, and exalted Christ.

## Text And Translation Helps

- Acts 2:16 is interpretively important. The KJV says, "**this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.**" Many modern versions read more like, "**this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel.**"
- That difference may sound small, but it can change how the reader understands Peter's claim. "**This is what was spoken**" can sound like Peter is only saying, "This reminds us of Joel's words." "**This is that**" presses the connection more strongly: Peter identifies the Pentecost event with the prophecy Joel spoke.
- Even so, the rest of Peter's quotation must also be kept in view. Joel includes Spirit outpouring, prophecy, won-

ders, signs, and the day of the Lord. Do not make Acts 2:16 so loose that it becomes only an illustration, but do not flatten Acts 2:19-20 as though every detail was visibly completed that morning.

- The KJV phrase **Holy Ghost** and the phrase **Spirit** both refer to the third Person of the Godhead. In verse 17 and verse 18, Peter quotes "my Spirit."
- Watch for translation choices that soften prophetic fulfillment language, remove time-setting language, or make Peter's Jewish prophetic explanation sound like a general Christian illustration. Small wording changes can produce large interpretive shifts in Acts 2.

## Common Ideas To Test

- “Pentecost means the mystery body of Christ began.”
  - Test it by Acts 2:16: Peter explains Pentecost by Joel, not by the later revelation given through Paul.
- “The men were acting drunk because Spirit-filled worship should look disorderly.”
  - Test it by Acts 2:15: Peter rejects the charge of drunkenness.
- “Joel’s prophecy has nothing to do with Pentecost.”
  - Test it by Acts 2:16: Peter says, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.”
- “Every detail of Joel was completed in full that morning.”
  - Test it by Acts 2:19-20: the quoted prophecy includes heavenly and earthly signs before the day of the Lord, so handle the connection with care.

## Session Summary

- Peter stands with the eleven and addresses Jerusalem.
- He rejects the charge that the speakers are drunken.
- He explains Pentecost by quoting Joel.
- Joel’s prophecy includes Spirit outpouring, prophecy, wonders, signs, and the day of the Lord.
- The quotation ends with the promise that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- Acts 2:14-21 should be read as Peter’s prophetic explanation, not as a shortcut to later Pauline mystery truth.

## For Long-Term Study

### Mark these themes as Acts unfolds

- Peter as spokesman for the twelve.
- Jerusalem still central.
- Israel still addressed.
- Prophecy explaining early Acts events.
- Signs requiring interpretation.
- The difference between prophecy and mystery.

### Questions to keep asking

1. Who is speaking?
2. To whom is Peter speaking?
3. What Scripture does Peter use to explain Pentecost?
4. What parts of Joel are quoted?
5. Has Paul appeared in the narrative yet?

### One sentence to remember

Peter explains Pentecost by standing with the eleven in Jerusalem and saying that the event belongs to what Joel had spoken, not to the mystery later revealed through Paul.