What Does This Mean?

Acts 2:12-22

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Acts 2:12-22 provides a model for answering the big questions people have about the meaning of life. By pointing them to God's Word, we can ultimately show them that Jesus is the answer.

Acts 2:12 says the crowd of pilgrims who gathered around the followers of Jesus "were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

Peter quoted from chapter two of the Old Testament prophet Joel as he began to answer the crowd's question.

While Peter explained that he and his audience were "in the last days" (2:17), he also looked ahead to the ultimate last day, "the day of the Lord" (2:20).

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit is both universal (on the body of Christ) and individual (on each believer in Jesus Christ).

In order to answer their question, Peter:

1. Turned them to the Word of God for answers.

2. Used the Word of God to point them to the ultimate answer.

3. Proclaimed Jesus Christ.

Questions to Consider

1. What are some of the deep questions that you've heard people ask about the meaning of life?

2. Peter described the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the fulfillment of a passage in the Old Testament book of Joel. The book of Joel is short; just three chapters long. Read all of Joel this week. Does it help your understanding of Acts 2 in any way?

3. Are we in the last days? If so, when did they begin? What will be the culmination of the last days?

4. What is the significance of the universality that Peter described in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (2:17-18)?

5. While prophecy in the Bible often includes foretelling something that is still to come, what is the most basic meaning of what it is to prophesy?

6. Think about how you might apply the pattern Peter followed. When people ask questions about fear and they are searching for hope, what Scriptures could you take them to in order to show them that there is a way to have hope and peace in times of crisis? What is a verse that would show them that true, lasting peace is only found through Jesus?

7. Why is it important that we identify Jesus as the ultimate answer, and not settle for a generic faith in god or some higher power?