

## 2 Peter Chapter 1:12-21

### Are You Listening to The Voice?

Hymns: #30 The God of Abraham Praise      #462 Be Thou My Vision

The story is told of Franklin Roosevelt, who often endured long receiving lines at the White House. He often complained that no one really paid any attention to what was said. One day, during a reception, he decided to try an experiment. To each person who came down the line and shook his hand, he murmured, "I murdered my grandmother this morning." The guests responded with phrases like, "Marvellous! Keep up the good work. We are proud of you. God bless you, sir."

It was not till the end of the line, while greeting the ambassador from Bolivia, that his words were actually heard. Nonplussed, the ambassador leaned over and whispered, "I'm sure she had it coming."

What kind of listener are you? And what voices do you listen to?

Last week we heard the "deep harmony" of the last words of the Apostle Peter when he said: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." His deep concern was to warn believers about the religious counterfeits that were present then and would be growing in number and cunning as the encroaching apostasy of professing Christendom came in like the tide. His first antidote, which we saw last Sunday, was the knowledge of Jesus Christ; that is for his hearers to recognize the value of knowledge; to be diligent in applying the virtues of knowledge and finally to experience the verification of the knowledge of Jesus in their assurance of salvation and Kingdom Rewards.

In this last half of Chapter 1, Peter now turns to his second antidote for believers against false teachers and their doctrinal apostasy; and that second antidote is "The Voice".

You may be familiar with the popular vocal talent show on television by the name "The Voice". In it contestants come on stage while the judges sit with their back to them, facing the audience. In front of each judge is big red button. The contestants begin their audition and when one of the judges thinks he has heard enough to warrant that contestant's selection, they slam their hand down on that Red Button in front of them stopping the contestant and swing their chairs around to face them for the first time. Frequently they are astounded to discover the kind of vessel this voice was coming from.

Today, Peter is going to tell us that there are three Voices we must remember, listen to and concentrate on. And if we do, they will so inspire us and captivate us by their beauty, uniqueness and future potential that we, like the judges on the Voice, will slam our hands on the red button and say YES to **THAT** voice. We will turn away from the audience of the world and its false teachers, face the source and say "I want THAT Voice". I've titled this morning's message "Are you listening to the voice?"

So what are these three safeguarding Voices and what do they say to us?

#### 1. The Apostolic Voice: It says to us "Remember"

V. 12-15 "So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has

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made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things."

The Apostle Peter's "Apostolic voice" first says he wants to "remind" us of things we already know. The first safeguard against false teachers and apostasy is not found in the new cultural moment ideas or in some mysterious, esoteric, or hidden knowledge out there somewhere. It is in what you already know. But the problem is you and I forget things.

A John Hopkins medical researcher discovered the top three things people most often forget are:  
1. Names- 83% 2. Where something is-60% 3. Telephone numbers- 57%. Now while this may be annoying it is not as critical as forgetting spiritual truth and unfortunately 100% of us are prone to this. The reason is because "we have this treasure in jars of clay"...in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7). And because these earthen vessels, that is our bodies, are cracked by sin, they tend to leak. In short, the apostolic voice reminds because we're a bunch of "crackpots". Apostolically delivered spiritual truth once received does not naturally stay with us forever. Unless we stay topped up we forget the names of saints in the Bible and what their lives teach us. We forget where something is, often asking "What book was that in?" It's not telephone numbers, but chapter and verse we most likely forget.

Jesus knew this was true of us, thus, it was to be one of the central aspects of the Holy Spirit's ministry to us. Jesus said, "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will **remind** you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)

Paul knew this was true of us, saying to the Romans "I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to **remind** you of them again" (Rom. 15:15). He said to the Philippians "It is no trouble for me to write the **same things to you again**, and it is a safeguard for you." Phil. 3:1

Jude was a plumber too and knew all about leaky vessels saying, "Though you already know all this, I want to **remind** you." Jude 1:5

Let us never be afraid of reminding each other of the things we know that others already know. Peter says here "it is right" to do so. It is a safeguard. This is part of how the Holy Spirit (The Paraclete) reminds us and Hebrews 3:13 tells us to literally "paraclete" one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

For this reason Peter said he wanted to "refresh" our memories; that is keep them topped up, not waiting for our spiritual gas tank to get down to where the warning light comes on the dashboard. He thought it right to do this both while he was living and also after he was gone. Peter knew his time was short so he was living in such a way as to "refresh" his hearer's minds with the short time he had left. There was a sense of urgency and focus about his last days. Like Paul, he was running all the way to the finish line and through the finish line; no pulling up and coasting the last 100 yards. Peter's first and second epistles are the evidence of this.

But Peter also wanted to leave a legacy; he was diligent in making sure that after his departure his hearers might "remember" all these things. He made preparations ahead of time. So what is Peter's legacy? Where is it? Could I suggest to you that the Gospel of Mark is the Apostle Peter's legacy? You see, Mark, the same John Mark who abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey became quite close with the Apostle Peter later in his life. Peter invested in Mark personally. He took him under his wing; he loved him and discipled him. In fact, the early Church Father Papias said "Mark was Peter's disciple and interpreter"<sup>1</sup> Interpreter of what? Well, it has long been held that it

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<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe; Be Alert; Victor Books; 1987 (p. 24)

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was actually the Apostle Peter who was the source of the collated and prepared content of the Gospel of Mark. How else could Mark have written his gospel when he was not present at the events? The answer is Peter and his eyewitness account of being there.

Let me ask you a question? What kind of life are you living? What kind of legacy are you leaving? After you are gone, should the Lord tarry, how will you be remembered? And will that memory be a memory refreshing legacy that inspires others to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ? Let us slam the red button and say YES to that Voice; The Apostolic Voice is in the Word of God; in the Scriptures that says to us "Keep on remembering!"

### **2. The Divine Voice: It says to us "Listen"**

V. 16-18 "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

The second safeguarding voice we must hear is the Divine Voice of the Triune God and it says to us "Listen". In contrast to "cleverly invented stories", the fables, literally the "myths" which were and are part and parcel of false teachers, Peter offers an eyewitness testimony to a preview of the Glorified Jesus Christ and the Divine Voice that came from the Majestic Glory. He is referring to his experience alongside James and John, when Jesus took them with him up to what is now known as the Mount of Transfiguration. All three synoptic Gospel writers give us this account.

Matthew tells us "There he (Jesus) was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. 4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Matthew 17:2-5)

The Father's testimony is that Jesus is His Son; that He loves Him and is well pleased with Him. The first thing we notice, and no doubt the three disciples noticed, is that God is not simply one as a single Divine unit. He has a Son. A Divine Son; a Glorified Son. And as they were later to discover He also has a Spirit that was to be given after Jesus was glorified in finality at His ascension (John 7:39). This is the Triune God. Three and yet One. Peter says he was there; he saw with his own eyes the glorified Jesus Christ and he heard the Father's Voice give personal testimony to His relational love and pleasure in His Son.

The Apostle John writes 1 John 5: 9-12 "We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10 Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

Denying the truth, doctrine and meaning of the Trinity was and continues to be a mark of false teachers and apostasy. Thus, another antidote Peter offers to his hearers against such teachers is his eyewitness account of the reality of God as Triune; the Trinity. Not only that, but of our

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participation in The Trinity; our participation in the “Perichoresis”, the “great dance” if you will, of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the Divine Voice saying “Listen to him”. If we listen to Jesus, what do we hear? Well, we hear Him speak about the unparalleled relationship He has with His Father. He and the Father are One. If you have seen me you have seen Him Jesus said. And it was this Oneness that Jesus prayed for when He asked the Father that those who would believe in Him through the apostolic testimony, “ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us...” (John 17:21) Participation in the Son’s communion with the Father by the Spirit is His prayer for you and me. Amazing, is it not?

But Peter was also eyewitness of two others on the Mount of Transfiguration. He saw Moses and Elijah. Their presence also bore testimony to Jesus. For both the Law, as represented in Moses, and the prophets, as represented by Elijah were said to have been fulfilled in Jesus when the Divine Voice ignored Peter’s suggestion of erecting three booths for each one of them. The Voice boomed: “Listen to **HIM**”. In other words, my Son is not just equal among Moses and Elijah. He is the fulfilment of everything Moses and Elijah saw and said.

Moses and Elijah are also prophetic representatives and types.

Moses is a type of the future resurrection. Deuteronomy 34 and Jude 9 seem to indicate that when Moses died God Himself buried him in an unknown place in Moab. At some later stage, he sent the archangel Michael to resurrect the body of Moses, but Michael was resisted by Satan who disputed with Him over the rights to Moses’ body. From Michael’s non slanderous and deferring response of “The Lord rebuke you”, he seems to have maintained his lower order arch-angel position in response to the higher order Anointed Cherub order of even fallen Satan. (We will see in Ch. 2: 11-12 that this exactly what the false teachers DON’T do. “Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. 12But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand.”) It appears the Lord did rebuke Satan and resurrected the body of Moses, and Peter was an eyewitness to seeing him.

Elijah on the other hand, was snatched up to heaven alive, thus he is a type of the future rapture and translation of the saints without seeing death. Both resurrection and rapture are imminent and will precede the future return of the same Glorified Jesus Christ to this earth.

The bold and arrogant voices of the false teachers and their doctrinal error cannot compare with the Divine Voice of Trinitarian testimony. Let us “Listen to Him”.

### **3. The Prophetic Voice: It says to us “Pay Attention”**

V. 19-21 “And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

The third safeguarding voice we must hear is the Prophetic Voice. False teachers within an apostatising professing Christendom are marked by their departure from the Apostolic Voice; they deliberately forget and no longer bring to their remembrance the authoritative and apostolic Word of God. They are also marked by deaf ears to the Divine Voice; they deny the name or meaning of

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the Trinity and no longer “Listen to Him”. Finally, Peter says that, unlike the true teachers, they no longer pay attention to the Prophetic Voice; these teachers and their followers ignore, conflate, confuse and “scoff” (2: Pet. 3:3-4) at prophecy. But in these three verses Peter gives seven truths about prophecy that if we “pay attention” to, will safeguard us from the false teachers and their destructive heresy.

1. **Prophecy is now more certain.** After it was clear to Jesus that Israel had finally rejected the Kingdom that was at hand, he gave a series of seven parables recorded in Matthew 13. Jesus used these parables to describe a new and previously unseen age which He called “the kingdom of heaven”. The kingdom heaven is a particular age within the all-encompassing Kingdom of God. It is marked by, among other things, a limited reception of the gospel; the sowing of counterfeits in amongst the true sons of the Kingdom; an abnormal, grotesquely large, visible, external structure of Christendom in which evil finds its home; and an invisible, all pervasive, and internal leavening of doctrinal error spreading within this form of Christendom. After Jesus had given the first parable of the sower he said to his disciples “For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.” (Matt. 13:7).

No doubt Peter had this in mind when he said in his first epistle how “Concerning (our) this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven” (1 Pet 1:10-12).

The “word of the prophets” is made more certain to us because we see and understand the bigger picture which was not and in fact could not have been revealed to the many prophets and righteous men Jesus spoke of. For example, we now clearly understand there is a gap of two thousand year and counting between the Messiah’s two comings. The prophets never saw this. And for us who have witnessed the incredible return of Israel to her land and the recovery of their lost language, how much more certain does that make all the rest of the as yet unfulfilled Jewish prophecies of the Kingdom? Pay attention to prophecy! It is now even more certain to us.

2. **Prophecy is a shining light.** You know, we live in very dark world. Events in Australia this past week have made it even darker. If it were not for the fact that Jesus told us of the downward trajectory of this Christ rejecting world and if it were not for the fact that the apostles warned us that false teachers would invade the local churches of Christendom, introduce false doctrines and lead many people astray...we would despair in hopelessness. But prophecy, particularly the promise of the Rapture, is a “light shining in a dark place”. We have a blessed hope, a comforting hope and a purifying hope in the prophetic promise of His imminent return. Yes, we’re in a dark world, but we ourselves are not in the dark.
3. **Prophecy rises in us.** Just as the morning star rises in the darkest part of the night, so also there is a rising conviction within us as we pay attention to the prophetic truths about Jesus in the Bible. When we see the morning star we know the night is nearly over. For the Church, Jesus Christ is the “bright morning star” (Rev. 22:16). When we see Him prophetically we know this dark age is coming to an end. The Day is at hand.

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4. **Prophecy dawns on us.** Prophecy will also dawn ON us in the Day of Kingdom experience. Jesus will establish His Millennial Kingdom and we shall reign with Him. What an amazing day that will be. It is certain. Just as surely as the sun rises and the day dawns following the morning star. He is coming and His Body, the called out ones, will co-reign with Him. What a glorious future awaits us. I can hardly wait!
5. **Prophecy is integrated.** Peter tells us in v.20 that no prophecy is literally “of **ITS** own interpretation”. In other words, no prophecy can be properly understood without integrating it with all other prophecies. The entire prophetic panorama hangs together as a whole. Did you know you can make the Bible prove just about anything you want so long as you isolate a particular passage out of context and don’t integrate it by interpreting scripture in light of scripture. For example, you can make a case that we should all commit suicide for there is a Bible verse that tells us Judas went and hung himself, and another verse that says “Go ye and do likewise”. Unfortunately, too many Christians have played fast and loose with prophecy and have committed eschatological suicide. Remember, “A text taken out of context is just a proof text for a pretext”.
6. **Prophecy is a God and Man endeavour.** Prophecy never originated from man, but from God. But neither were men mere inanimate pens or puppets. Rather, our Sovereign Triune God of Grace, in grace, inspired every Word of Scripture and then breathed it in and through very real men with very real personalities and styles of communication. (2 Tim. 3:16). The Spirit carried men along on the wind of His breath. Since Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, is fully God and fully man, it is not surprising then that the written Word of God, the Bible bearing testimony to Him, would be of a similar God-Man nature.
7. **Prophecy is the God-Man’s testimony.** Finally, Prophecy is in the final analysis the testimony of the God-Man Jesus. Revelation 19:10 tells us “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”. As you and I pay attention to the Prophetic Voice, we will encounter both the spirit and testimony of Jesus Himself. So, the prophetic voice tells us a lot about Jesus. But it also says a lot about us if we are not paying attention to prophecy.

The Apostolic Voice remembered; the Divine Voice listened to and the Prophetic Voice given our attention are the three safeguards Peter gives to protect us from the false teachers which we will look at in detail over the next three Sundays in Chapter 2.

Are you listening to the Voice? Have you heard enough? Do you want that Voice? Then slam your hand down on that red button, turn away from the world and face the Triune God of Grace and tell Him today that you want “**THAT** Voice”.

Let's pray...