

Listen To God

2 Peter 1:16-21(ESV) ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Apostolic age was beginning to close. The original apostles were dropping like flies as they were martyred, one by one, all except the beloved apostle John, who lived well into his 90’s, and is the only apostle to die of natural causes. Jesus promised the disciples in His last teaching before the crucifixion that the Holy Spirit would bring to their memory everything that Jesus had taught them. **John 14:26 (ESV)** ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” What was written was brought to the mind of the disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit as was promised by Jesus. Jesus has revealed to us through their writings everything Jesus wants us to know about Himself. It was the activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the authors that made this happen.

“¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Obviously there were critics speaking against the apostle’s writings. Peter is defending what they wrote and why they wrote it. Speaking of their

experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James and John heard the very voice of God the Father and saw the actual glory cloud in which God resides. They felt things, they heard things, they saw things that only they felt, heard, and saw. But their eyewitness to the event is not what is most significant. ¹⁹“And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

The critics of the apostle's writings thought them to be out of their minds and having overactive imaginations. “What you guys are writing are nothing more than myths.” Peter brings up the Mount of Transfiguration experience and relates it to what was written in the past found in Psalm 2. “Don't believe it because of our experience on the mountain.” Believe it because of the word of prophecy found in Psalm 2 that was fulfilled on the Mount of Transfiguration of what we ourselves experienced.

What the critics refused to accept was the apostolic and prophetic teaching that Jesus was coming again to judge the living and the dead. Peter has much to say about the 2nd coming of Jesus in the remainder of this letter. A side note. The Book of Revelation speaks of twenty-one judgments to come before the second coming. It is my view that many of the judgments in Revelation mirror the judgments at the time of the Exodus with the 10 plagues. I believe God is working overtime these days to turn our attention on to Him. The Bible says you cannot ignore God and get away with it. God will not be mocked. God only allows things to slide so far and then as the Bible says, “God gave them over to their sin.” God uses nature, physical illness, pestilences, weird weather patterns, and more to point us away from our sin and toward the Lord God Almighty. Yes, Jesus is coming again. The critics of Peter thought otherwise because they rejected the fact that their lives one day will be held accountable to God. Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead. We will answer to God for the lives we have led and

receive specific rewards where we were faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. I can honestly say that there are behaviors I will never involve myself in because of judgment day to come. Knowing that I have to answer to God for specific actions and words restrains me from letting it all hang out so to speak. You know my filter already has holes but the fact of the judgment to come has kept me from doing and saying things that would greatly dishonor God. To be quite frank it is the reason I am still in the ministry. It is my calling and I dare not disobey. If there were no judgment to come why not just sin all you want because there are no consequences? Wrong. Yes, Jesus paid the price for our sins. The Bible tells us we will give an account to every word spoken and for the way we treated one another. That is serious business. The rewards to be received for faithfulness will last for eternity. Knowing that now motivates us to be obedient unto God for the joys set before us in the afterlife. It is sinful human nature to want to ignore the final judgment so we can do what we want, when we want to do it, and with whomever we want.

I know of a person, in another state, who went through a terrible depression that lasted for several months. This person often spoke to me, and I listened intently. Do you know what pulled this person out of the depression. The fact of the judgment to come. The fact that we will answer to Jesus for the lives we lived here means what we do here is so important to God that we will receive eternal rewards for our good works done onto Christ. In other words, this life truly counts. Every day counts for God. We are never to weary in doing good. **1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV)** “⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” **1 Corinthians 15:58 (TMSG)** “my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don’t hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort.” What you do for the Lord truly counts. Our lives here are significant to God. Time is not to be wasted.

¹⁹And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

We have something better, much better than what Peter, James, and John experienced on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yes, they heard and experienced the very voice of God the Father. What is better than their experience is the full Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. The authors were carried along by the Holy Spirit and wrote what God wanted to be written. The word "carried along" comes from a term that we use today, and the word is ferry. Coming from Washington state we have what are called super ferries where hundreds of cars and trucks will fit onto a ferry. We all get on and are ferried across Puget Sound to the same destination. The writers of the Scriptures were ferried along, carried by the Holy Spirit, to the destination God set. The words we read are the words God wants us to read. It is His Word in written form given to us so we can be ferried to the other side which is, of course, heaven.

Before I close I want to say this. You have to have the Holy Spirit inside of you to understand the words that were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The spirit of this age rejects the word of God and calls it myths. The Holy Spirit inside of you lets you know that the Word of God is truth. Those who live their lives to destruct the Bible, to destroy faith in the Word will one day answer to God too. Even as those of us who teach the Word and believe in it will answer to God to see if we handled it correctly. I take that with great seriousness.

Yes, Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. Why is that judgment **important? Why should we even care about it?**

1. It stresses our accountability to God that yes, our lives here truly do matter for eternity.
2. It means that God's justice will triumph over all wrongs.
3. It gives dignity to the humblest of action. Giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty person is noticed by God.
4. It means that all wrongs will one day be righted. No matter how badly you have been wronged God will make everything right and correct, the way it ought to be. You will never be mistreated again.
5. The fact that Jesus is coming again means history is moving to a definite end. The final judgment means history is moving toward a goal.
6. It means all the redeemed of God will experience a new world and the perfection of the old.
7. It means the goodness of God triumphs completely over evil. It is unthinkable that the present conflict between good and evil should last through eternity.
8. It means that evil will be disposed of, authoritatively, decisively, and finally.
9. Judgement means that in the end God's will will be done perfectly.

I close with this thought. What I sense in unchristian America today is an all-out rebellion against God. Instead of seeking God first, people have made their own desires, those inner drives as their master and lord. Sinful inner drives that mock God has become the norm. When a young person is confused about their maleness or femaleness, instead of seeking God's will they seek their own will, an inner rebellion against God that most often leads to disaster.

Let us pray. Dear Lord God our hearts ache for the young people of our time who are dealing with so much confusion, stress, and pressure. We ask that in their confusion they would

turn to Jesus who has the exact truth they need to guide their every decision. This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.