

10am HC Sunday 15 February 2026 – Second Sunday before Lent

Exodus 24:12-end, 2 Peter 1:16-end, Matt 17:1-9 – Faith is founded on promises about Jesus confirmed by promises made by Jesus

Last Monday the news reported the deaths of two of the last D-day veterans. Their deaths are newsworthy, because with their deaths we have lost the opportunity to hear, from the people who were there, what happened on one of the most important days in history. One of the two, Albert Lamond, from Glasgow, was an 18-year-old signalman aboard HMS Rowley when he took part in the Allied invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944. Albert said about D-Day, *"It was horrible. It lives with you forever, [but] If we don't pass the stories on, people will forget, and we can't let that happen."*

Albert knew that he had a story to tell, and he knew that it was an important story.

German Jewish author Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz was equally determined to pass on his story. He incorporated his own and his family's history into his novel entitled *The Passenger*, about the plight of Jews who left it too late to leave Nazi Germany and who experienced the despair that followed the anti-Jewish pogroms of November 1938.

Across Europe, hardly any Jews survived the death camps. Boschwitz himself was able to escape to Sweden, and eventually would come to England, where his novel was published in 1939. Boschwitz was then sent from England to Australia. But Boschwitz died when his transport ship was torpedoed in 1942, making the publication of his story about the experience of Jews in Germany all the more important.

If the full truth is to be known, eyewitness evidence is vital.

Peter, writing to the first Christian believers now living in exile across Greece and Asia Minor, knows that he too has an important story to tell, of ***the power and coming of [the] Lord Jesus Christ***. Replying to the people who are saying that his stories about Jesus are nothing more than ***cleverly devised myths***, Peter reminds the believers that he and the other disciples ***had been eyewitnesses of [Jesus'] majesty***. Peter pulls out perhaps the most powerful of all the personal stories that he can tell about his time with Jesus: the time when

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

It was a dramatic and unforgettable experience; Peter saw Jesus **transfigured before them... his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white**, and then **suddenly there [were] Moses and Elijah, talking with [Jesus]**. Peter remembered himself babbling nonsense, offering to make dwellings for all three, when **suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them and from the cloud** they heard the voice of God, and Peter and the others **fell to the ground...overcome by fear**.

You can speculate and pontificate as much as you like, but the only person who really knows what happened is the one who was actually there. If you know the musical *Hamilton* you'll remember the importance of being there, in *The Room where it happened*. It was Mark Twain who said **nothing spoils a good story like the arrival of an eyewitness**. Peter was determined to challenge the claim that he was peddling lies about Jesus.

Peter has seen with his own eyes how Jesus **received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice [from the cloud] was conveyed to him ... saying "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased"**. As Peter says, **we ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain**.

Eyewitness evidence was crucial to enabling Peter and the other disciples to speak and to write convincingly about Christ – about his confirmation as the Son of God by God himself, and about God's command to **listen to him**.

But Peter is aware that it is not just Peter's authority to speak about his experience of Jesus that is being challenged. The false teachers are also challenging the authority of the Old Testament. So Peter also addresses the implications of all that Peter and the other apostles have witnessed for the authority of the Old Testament. Because Peter knows that the coming of Jesus does not mean that we are to ditch the Old Testament; on the contrary

Jesus' ministry, his life, death and resurrection, confirm all of God's promises in the Old Testament.

The false teachers have been telling the early Christians that there's no particular power in what the Old Testament prophets had been prophesying, because whatever their words might mean for those who come after them is just a matter of opinion. They are saying that prophecy is no more than ***a matter of one's own interpretation***. Peter contends this is nonsense, because ***no prophecy of scripture is [ever just] a matter of one's own interpretation; ... no prophecy ever came by human will, but [always because] men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God***.

For Peter, the events of Jesus' life and death and resurrection, of which he and the other apostles had been eyewitnesses, established that ***we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed***. John Calvin, writing in the 16th century, put it like this: ***The authority of the word of God is the same as it was in the beginning, and then it was given further confirmation than before by the advent of Christ***. It wasn't that what had been said wasn't true before, but rather, that what was true before was now seen *even more clearly* to have been true before.

And why does it matter whether or not Old Testament prophecy is confirmed to be true? Well, if the Old Testament prophets who were claiming to be speaking with the authority of God did *not* have authority that would undermine our confidence in their message. And having confidence in their message is still important, because God means us to depend upon it.

Confirmation of a promise that has been made in love is something to remember; something you can rely upon. We know this from our own personal experience. Perhaps you can recall a time when somebody who loved said or did something that confirmed their love for you. Perhaps it was your mother, or father, or a brother or sister, a very good friend, or your husband or wife. Somebody who showed with that action or that conversation that they had your back. Think back to that time. Remember how that felt.

The promise that God would send his Son as saviour; his offer of salvation to everybody who trusts in his name... When that promise and that offer have been **fully confirmed** by the events to which Peter and the other apostles **had been eyewitnesses**, it becomes much easier to believe in those promises as a light to live by.

The confirmation that enables us to trust in Old Testament prophecy is not only a sign that God cares about his people, and therefore wants them to have the comfort of knowing that what is unfolding is occurring within the constraints that he has given to his created world. Being able to trust in God's promises also means, as Peter says, that Christians can **be attentive to [his confirmation of] the prophetic message as to a lamp shining in a dark place.**

For Peter and the other disciples, struggling to come to terms with all that would happen later to Jesus; trying to make sense of Jesus' going willingly to his travesty of a trial, and then to be tortured on the cross, it would be the confirmation of Jesus' divinity and of his being the beloved Son of God that would help Peter and the other disciples to make sense of it all.

It would become easier to see that the true glory of Jesus lies not in being **transfigured [so that] his face shone like the sun and his clothes became dazzling white**, nor in the endorsement as the beloved Son of God by a voice from heaven, but in the humility of submitting to his Father's will and going to the cross to pay for your sin and mine, so that we can be righteous before God as if we had no sin.

Peter's eyewitness testimony matters, because it helps us to live out our faith in confidence. Faith founded on the promises of God in Old Testament prophecy *about* Jesus, and promises that were confirmed *by* Jesus.