

# Why Would the Unbelieving World Ask About Your Hope?

Why in 1 Peter 3:15 does the unbelieving world ask Christians about their hope?

Peter tells us, “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a *reason for the hope that is in you*” (1 Peter 3:15). He doesn’t say that they will ask about our faith, or about our doctrine, or even about our good conduct. They might ask those things. We want them to. But Peter is expecting that they will ask about our *hope*. Why?

Before we look at the answer in 1 Peter, let’s define hope.

*Hope is a heartfelt, joyful conviction that our short-term future is governed by an all-caring God, and our long-term future, beyond death, will be happy beyond imagination in the presence of the all-satisfying glory of God.* This definition will be evident in part one of our answer.

Why does the world ask about Christian hope? The answer has three parts.

**1. Vibrant, living, unshakable, blood-bought hope is the defining motion of the born-again heart, that is, the Christian heart.** Peter begins his letter on this note: “According to God’s great mercy, he has caused us to be *born again to a living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). To be born again is to be alive with hope.

Hope is not an add-on to Christian experience. It is part of the first things. The essential things. It is a vital component of saving *faith*, because part of what we *believe* relates to our future. It is impossible to be a Christian and keep on believing that your eternity will be

bleak. Saving faith is the “assurance of things hoped for,” and such faith believes that “God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:1, 6).

Therefore, Peter is relentless in his letter to urge the suffering exiles of the empire to fan the flame of their hope to white hot fullness.

The first imperative in his letter is the imperative of the verb “hope,” modified by the adverb “fully.” “*Hope fully* in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13). The second coming of Jesus in glory is the earnest hope of the believer’s heart.

Peter had tasted the glory with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, and he knew it was a foretaste of the second coming: “We made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ... we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16). He knew that he would be “a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed” (1 Peter 5:1).

So he was passionate about wakening this hope fully in the beleaguered saints scattered through the empire. He promised the elders among them, “When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:4).

And he explained to the suffering saints that God’s purpose in their sorrows is “that the tested genuineness of your faith ... may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7). Their slander will be replaced with praise, their pain with glory, their shame with honor.

He tells them to hang on with hope for this short life, because soon all will be glorious: “After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10).

This hope is absolutely sure because it was paid for by a ransom that is not perishable or cheap, but eternal and infinitely precious: “You were ransomed . . . not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18–19).

So Peter urges the believers, with their blood-bought hope, to do the humanly impossible: “Rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed” (1 Peter 4:13).

And short of that final day, there is this daily confidence in God’s present care: “Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). He cares now. He will care tomorrow. And he will care forever.

Therefore, part one of our answer to why the world asks about the Christian hope is that *vibrant, living, unshakable, blood-bought hope is the defining motion of the Christian heart.*

Stay tuned Monday in the second of this two-part series to find out the final two parts of this question.

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