



OUR CURIOUS CONQUEROR


SUMMARY: This passage in 1 Peter 3 contains some of the most well-known verses in the letter while also some of the most confusing. It begins by moving out from the specific examples that were focused on in 2:18-3:7 and into a reader wide address.

It begins with a group of traits which focus on internal relationships before moving onto how we relate to external hardships. These ideas are then backed up through the passage from Psalm 34 which gives an extra focus on God's sovereignty.

In verse 13, he then gets back to the issue of suffering again identifying the reality of suffering for doing good. In the light of this pain and fear they are called to focus in on Jesus as their sovereign and holy Lord. With Jesus as Lord, we have nothing to fear in the world.

Peter then points out that this lack of fear will be seen as hope and that hope needs to be explained to anyone that would ask. 1 Peter 3:15-16 is the heart of Christian apologetics. The hope that we have is not in a God who is absent from our suffering but one who himself suffered and now reigns.

To expand this image, Peter refers to an event that is unseen anywhere else in our Bibles, Jesus proclaiming to the imprisoned spirits after his death. This event is linked to both the story of Noah and the events of baptism leaving us scratching our heads. Yet in all this confusion there is a simple reality that is obvious and one that verse 22 makes clear. Jesus is our conquering king under whom all powers are in submission.

1. Why were the traits of verse 8 so important to the survival of the early church?
 2. Why might we forget their importance?
 3. Why is it so hard to respond to evil and insults with blessing? (v.9)
 4. How does Peter's quote from Psalm 34 add to what he says in verses 8&9?
 5. Why should our understanding of Jesus as Lord be the cure to all our fears? (v.15)
 6. How is a life of hope in Jesus seen? (v.15)
 7. Do you think you could give a reason for the hope that you have?
 8. How does Jesus' suffering give us a new perspective on our own suffering?
 9. What do you understand verses 19-21 to mean?
 10. What are some important steps to take when we reach passages in the Bible that are difficult to understand?
 11. Why is verse 22 critical to understanding what Peter is teaching his readers?
 12. How does understanding that the powers of this earth and the forces of the spiritual world are in total submission to Jesus effect the way we live?
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I PETER 3:8-22

