



## ABOUT “SCATTERED”

*“Peter ... to God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered ...” 1 Peter 1*

*During the Covid-19 Lockdown I was asked by people isolated in their homes with limited opportunity to join virtual groups for help with a Bible Study suited to the times. This is my response: Bible studies that don’t require a group, a leader or a marker. Please feel free to pass them to others. They can be downloaded, emailed, printed or posted. I’d encourage you to share your thoughts, answers, and questions, with at least one other person: phone them up if you can’t meet. I’d also love to see your answers and questions: email or post them to me (details below) if you want to. If I can, I’ll answer you – and if not, be assured every response contributes to the ongoing development of these studies. In Christ, Michael L Drake*

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## INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER 2:1-8

In Christ, Christians are separated *from* the world *to* God: that’s what it means to be “holy.” So Peter calls God’s people to live the holy obedience to which we are sanctified. Peter started his letter with a focus on the suffering his scattered readers faced in their daily lives, but half way through chapter one he has turned to look at the need for holiness of life. This section of 1 Peter begins, in verse 1, with a call to be rid of sin that springs from within, and ends in verse 12 with a call to holiness that is so visibly good that unbelieving pagans praise God because of what they see in Christians.

Peter uses a lot of word-pictures or metaphors. It’s important to understand what these vivid images mean, and not to make more of them than Peter intends. Usually there is one point in a metaphor, and we need to be careful not to invent extra ideas. Here, he picks up on the idea of believers having been born again (compare that with John 3). In chapter 1 (verse 23) he said this birth came from “imperishable seed” and not the seed of natural birth – he wants us to understand that our spiritual transformation and life came through God’s eternal word and not through something from man. Now he tells us to be like new-born babies – not in immaturity, but hungering for God’s word as if it is as desirable for us as a mother’s milk is for a new baby who has just discovered it.

Three big metaphors dominate this section: believers are like new-born babies, like a spiritual building, and like God’s chosen people, Israel. In this study we look at what it means to be “new-born babies” and a “spiritual house.” In study 6 we’ll look at being a “chosen people.” Peter brings these ideas together to support his call to be holy. Yet although Peter calls us to holiness, it is not who we are or what we do that is Peter’s main point: above all, this passage is about Jesus. To you who believe, Jesus is precious: “The one who puts his trust in him will never be put to shame.”

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# SCATTERED #5 1 Peter 2:1-8

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## GETTING STARTED

Please remember that this is God's Word. God used Peter to write God's words in God's way for us. So

1. Pray, asking God to give you his Spirit so that you will honour him, understand his word, and learn how to live better for Jesus.
2. Read the passage listed above for this study. What is it mainly about?
3. Now discuss/think about/answer the questions that follow.

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## TAKE ACTION LIKE NEW-BORN BABIES

1. **For Peter, holiness shows in the way we treat others. Compare the list of sins we need to rid ourselves of in verse 1 with the list Paul gives in Galatians 5:19-21: what is the common factor in these two lists?** (Matthew 15:11 is helpful in answering this question.)
  
2. **Chapter 2 begins with the word, "Therefore." This means that the reason we should rid ourselves of these sins is found in what he has just written in chapter 1 about what has happened to us. What has happened to us, and what has caused that to happen?** (See 1 Peter 1:23)

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Notice that the reason we need to get rid of sin is not to make us free from sin, but *because* we have been made free from sin in Christ. The reason we should live holy lives is not so that we can become holy, but *because* we have been made holy – that is, set aside for God – in Christ. The reason we should live as if we are alive in Christ is not so that we can be made alive, *because* we are alive in Christ. Read James 2:14-17, where James makes a similar point: faith in Jesus does save us, but such saving faith *always* results in the "good works" of true holiness.

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3. **Once a new-born baby tastes its mother's milk, it wants more! And with the very limited powers it has, it takes action to get more – it cries until satisfied. Peter says we are to have a similar active craving – but we are to crave for "spiritual milk."**
  - a. **Lots of people make up things that could be called "spiritual milk." But quickly scan these verses in 1 Peter: 1:24,25; 2:6-8, and 22; 3:10-12; 4:18; 5:5. Where does Peter go for the "milk" that feeds his understanding and faith?** (Clue: For Peter, the same thing that begins our life sustains it – see 1 Peter 1:22)
  
  - b. **How does the result of feeding on "spiritual milk" resemble the result of a baby feeding on its mother's milk?**
  
  - c. **A new-born baby knows that its mother's milk tastes good. Peter uses that to encourage us to think more about what we "taste" when we come to Jesus. Look at verse 3, and compare it to Psalm 34:8. Then describe what why "spiritual milk" tastes good.**

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## BUILDING WITH LIVING STONES

4. Verse 4 says that Jesus is a “living stone.” In chapter 1 verse 3 we are told why he is living: he is raised from the dead. That is no metaphor, it is a real description of who Jesus is. But calling him a stone is a metaphor. Each of the verses listed below identifies one or more ways Jesus is like a stone: for each verse list the way or ways in which Jesus is like a stone:
  - a. Verse 6:
  - b. Verse 7:
  - c. Verse 8:
5. Peter also describes this “stone” as precious. To whom is Jesus a “precious stone” and why? (Look carefully! He is precious to more than one. Check verses 4, 6 and 7.)
6. But Peter says (in verses 7 & 8) that Jesus is not precious to everyone. How is Jesus like a stone to those people?

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When he talks about a “spiritual house” Peter is likening the “building” of believers together to the Old Testament Temple. We are the stones being built on the foundation of Christ. Peter also shows us that the Old Testament refers to Jesus as both the cornerstone and the capstone. No single stone can be both the foundation (cornerstone) and the final stone that holds the building together (the capstone). This shows the limits of a metaphor: each likeness highlights one aspect of Jesus, but no building block of stone can picture every aspect of Jesus.

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7. Verses 4 & 5 say that as we come to Jesus we are “being built into a spiritual house” like the Temple.
  - a. Who builds us into this house?
  - b. What should we do in that house as it is built?

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“Spiritual sacrifices” could mean lots of things, but what Peter means should become clear in the next study, because he explains that in the next few verses that are included in *Scattered Study #6*.

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## BE LIVING STONES!

8. In the light of these verses: What can you thank God for? What can you pray for others? What can you trust God for?
9. In the light of these verse, what changes do you need to make: In your faith? In your worship? In your attitude? In your life?