



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

INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER 1:3-9

The first two verses of Peter’s letter to Christians scattered around the world is a greeting. In verse 3 he begins his message to those he describes as suffering “grief in all sorts of trials” by praising God. It is clear that he has in mind things of real difficulty. That could include the terrors of disease (such as Covid-19), or situations that shatter our otherwise quiet lives (such as persecution, floods, war, Covid-19 lockdowns and poverty).

But Peter doesn’t say, “Praise God *because* you are suffering,” although he will help us to see that suffering is part of God’s plan and does actually do us good, not lasting harm. No. He tells us to praise God because we have something that is so much better than suffering. Because of it, we are not only overcoming suffering, but are filled with “an inexpressible and glorious joy” even in suffering. You might well respond that overwhelming joy is not what you experience in suffering! But, inspired by God, as God’s messenger (Apostle), Peter shows us in these few verses, that such joy belongs to us. It’s ours! If we don’t experience it, that’s because we are overlooking our “hope.”

Peter uses the word “hope” in a way that is different from how it is usually used in our culture today. People say they hope for something that they want but don’t really expect to get. But Peter uses it to describe things that are certain to happen, things that are certain to be ours, or things that are already certainly ours, even though we don’t see or experience them at present. That certainty is a certainty for every Christian because of what Jesus has done, is doing, and will do for us. When we grasp that, we will experience the joy he describes – joy God has already given us. We will be able to do that even in the middle of difficult times. Then we too will be praising God whatever trials we suffer.

Prepared by Michael L Drake, 15A Steeple Rise, Pakuranga, Auckland 2010, New Zealand, and may be reproduced, copied, distributed and used freely.
Website: <https://www.michaeldrake.name/scattered> Email: mldrake@gmail.com (Please do not send unsolicited commercial email)

Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011, by International Bible Society. Used by permission.

SCATTERED #2 1 Peter 1:3-9

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.
-

PRAISE GOD!

1. **Is Peter's exclamation, "Praise God!" his own exclamation of praise or an instruction to his readers?**
(There is help in answering this question in the following verses: when does he included others with himself by using the word "us," when is he using "I" to talk about himself, and when does he use "you?")

2. **We know that God is a Trinity: one God in three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and that each is fully God, truly eternal and without any beginning. We often speak of God the Father as "our Father," but here Peter calls the Father "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We usually think of fatherhood in terms of procreation: giving life to a child. But the biblical idea of fatherhood is about relationship. Read John 5:16-30, then explain in what way is God the Father, Jesus' Father (or in other words, what is the relationship between the Father and the Son)?**

3. **When Peter exclaims, "Praise God," he is not just using a popular, happy saying. He has reasons for his praise, reasons which he uses in praising God. What reasons can you list from verses 3 & 4?**

4. **In our natural birth, our mothers did it (gave birth to us), bringing us into the location of this world, into life in this world, and into the expectation of suffering (and eventually death). According to verses 3 & 4, how is the "new birth" of verse 3 different?**

5. **What expression in verses 3-4 is linked to what Peter once heard Jesus say as recorded in John 14:1-4? What does that have to do with our life now?**

GREAT JOY IN GREAT TRIALS

6. At the beginning of verse 5 Peter uses the same image of a “shield” as Paul used in Ephesians 6:16. According to Peter, why do we greatly rejoice in this shield?

7. “The last time” or “last times” are terms used in various ways throughout the Bible. How does verse 7 help explain what Peter means by “the last time” in verse 5?

8. In verse 5 we are told that our salvation is “ready to be revealed” in the last time, but verse 9 says that we are “receiving” it. What contrasts does Peter record that explains how we are presently experiencing salvation and yet have to wait for that salvation to be revealed?

9. In verse 6 he says our trials are “for a little while.” It often doesn’t seem a little while! Why is Peter right when he says our suffering is only for a little while even if that’s not our experience?

10. Peter likens our trials to fire. That certainly fits much of our experience! He says it is like a refiners’ fire that removes impurities from pure gold. What two results does Peter say come from our refining, proving that our faith is a genuine work of God?
(You might like to compare this with Hebrews 12:7-13)

11. Peter says that it is faith in Jesus whom we cannot see that is proved genuine. It’s our faith, so why does that faith result in praise, glory and honour for Jesus?
(Hebrews 11:1 and Ephesians 2:8,9 will help answer this question.)

PRAY & LIVE!

12. In the light of these verses: What can you thank God for? What can you pray for others? What can you trust God for?

13. 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?