



## 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 1:17-21

Peter now anchors his call for holy living in the preciousness of our redemption in Christ. God’s impartiality, our redemption and new birth, together with the enduring nature of God’s word, make a compelling case for us to be holy.

In verse 18, Peter mentions the “empty way of life handed down from your forefathers.” This is a stark reminder to the scattered Jewish Christians that the way of life without faith that they inherited was empty. Those who relied on works of the law had an inheritance from their forefathers, but not from their forefather Abraham. “Those who *believe* are the children of Abraham,” (Galatians 3:6-10) not those whose inheritance is by “natural descent” (John 1:12,13). True, Gentile believers too have been redeemed from an empty way of life, albeit their inheritance has not been as traditional!

Some consider 1 Peter can’t have been written to Jewish Christians as their inheritance of the “very words of God” (Romans 3:2) was not “empty.” Yet their forefathers consistently rejected that inheritance with unbelief, an emptiness which they passed on through the ages. Jesus said of leading Jews of his day, “You belong to your father, the devil” (John 8:44). The Jewish crowd yelling, “Crucify him!” revealed an “empty” inheritance of unbelief from *their* forefathers (Luke 11:47-52). Paul says unbelieving Jews “heap up their sins,” (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16), and he counted his Jewish inheritance of works as rubbish (Philippians 3:1-11). Referring to an empty way of life “handed down from your fathers” does aptly apply to Jewish unbelievers!

But all Christians, Jewish and Gentile alike, need to abandon “what the pagans choose to do.” Peter showcases a redemption more precious than silver or gold. It is a redemption made (or paid for) with the precious blood of Christ, a redemption that gifts us the treasure of a new way of life to be lived “as strangers here in reverent fear.”

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# SCATTERED #4 1 Peter 1:17-25

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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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## GOD JUDGES BELIEVERS

1. Translations of verse 17 vary, with either "Since you call on God" or "And if you call on God." It's not ideal English to begin a sentence with "and," but it's OK in Greek, and that is how verse 17 begins, so verses 16 and 17 are linked. How is the Christian's way of life described in those linked verses?
2. It's possible Peter had in mind a particular way his readers were calling upon God (verse 17). But as he doesn't say we don't have to know to understand his message. Read these verses about calling on God: Genesis 4:26; 1 Kings 18:24; Psalm 14:4; Psalm 55:16; Psalm 145:18; Isaiah 55:6; Romans 10:12-13; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:22. What basic attitude to God do they share with 1 Peter 1:17?
3. What does verse 17 tell us about God, and what does that mean for the way we should live?
4. When Peter says that God judges "each man's work," he includes all believers, otherwise he wouldn't use God's judging as a reason for believers to be holy. But Christians have been given a *perfect* righteousness in Jesus. No works we do can make us "more" right with God (see verses 18-21.) God's judgement of believers is not about our righteousness, so it has to be about something else. Read Ephesians 2:10, James 2:14-26, Hebrews 12:4-13, and 1 Peter 2:1, then answer these questions:
  - a. Why does God judge Christians' works?
  - b. What do Christians' good works show?
5. In verse 17, some translations use "sojourners," or "strangers," to speak of Christians. But "foreigners" best captures the idea Peter has in mind. Read Hebrews 11:13 and Ephesians 2:19, then explain in what ways those texts show that Christians are foreigners here:
6. In verse 18, Peter mentions the "passions" or "empty way of life" his readers inherited from their forefathers. Read verse 17 again, before also reading Romans 3:10-18 and Proverbs 14:27; then explain how those texts characterise an empty way of life compared with a holy one, for us as well as for them.

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**REDEEMED!**

To be redeemed is to be freed from captivity or slavery by some form of payment. Peter pictures Christians as redeemed from being slaves to an empty way of life in which there was no fear of God.

7. According to verse 19, what makes our redemption more costly or precious than silver and gold?
  
8. According to verse 20, Jesus was chosen as redeemer before the foundation of the world, but only revealed in “these last times.,” which, Peter says, was for our benefit. What two things, according to verse 21, did God do for the crucified Christ, and what two things does that give us, that could only have happened when Christ was revealed?
  
9. Verse 22 says we have “purified ourselves.” That can’t mean “cleansed from sin” as that is what Jesus’ sacrifice alone has done for us. Peter is using the term in the sense of being made holy by being set aside for God (see study #3). How have faithful believers set themselves aside for God’s use and glory?
  
10. Verse 22 indicates that such purification has a result and involves a duty. Identify each.
  
11. Most versions begin verse 23 with “for” or “since,” showing that the things of verse 22 spring from our being born again. Read Isaiah 40:6-8, then explain what “seed” gives this new birth, and how that “seed” contrasts with the “seed” that gives natural life to men and plants.
  
12. What is the link between the “truth” of verse 22, the “seed” of verse 23, and the “word that was preached” in verse 25? What does that mean for how we gain and maintain holiness?

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**PRAY & LIVE!**

13. In the light of these verses: What can you thank God for? What can you pray for others? What can you trust God for?
  
14. 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?