



ABOUT “SCATTERED”

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

Scattered is a series of Bible Studies you can do alone at home, or with others in a group. They don’t depend on a leader or someone affirming the right answer. The title of the series comes from Peter’s addressing his letter to “*strangers in the world, scattered throughout*” the world. Christians will always be scattered in this world in all sorts of ways. Writing the series started during the Covid-19 lockdowns when we were as isolated as if we had been scattered. But Peter highlights the fact that it is our separation *to Christ* that separates *us from the world*. So he sees Christians as scattered strangers struggling in an alien world, and sets out to encourage us to live faithful and holy lives in Christ.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER 5:1-14

Peter closes his letter to the scattered Christians suffering persecution with some very famous and often quoted verses: “Humble yourselves “ (v6); “Cast all your anxiety on him.” (v7); “The devil prowls around like a roaring lion.” (v8); “resist the devil ... stand firm in the faith.” (v9). While these verses do have real encouragement to be faithful in every circumstance, the context is actually the need for young Christians to be in submission to their elders. So such submission is not merely a civil and respectful duty, but an exercise of faith in the realm of spiritual warfare.

But Peter begins this chapter with directions to elders, directions that might seem largely irrelevant to those who are not elders. Of course, we all need to know the sort of faith and life God prescribes for those he calls as elders, but these verses have a much wider application than that. They stand as standards against which Peter highlights the faith and life God calls younger Christians to. Further, the whole package of verse 1 through 11 is really applicable to us all.

The last few verses (12-14) are a sort of administrative tidy-up – albeit, in Peter’s way, they are still intensely spiritual. He mentions that Silas (or Silvanus as the Greek could be translated) has helped him write the letter, presumably as a scribe helping the aging Peter who was having difficulty writing for himself. Reference to “she who is in Babylon” is likely a Church in the place he is writing from. It could have been a place with the name “Babylon” but the whole sentence appears to be a thinly disguised code for a church and a place his readers would be aware of. Tradition from about the year 100 AD on suggests “Babylon” is code for “Rome” as it is in Revelation, but we can’t be certain and there is no biblical evidence of Peter having gone to Rome. What this all indicates is that the persecution was so real that Peter disguises anything that would identify and bring further persecution to Christians.

But perhaps the most significant point in this closing is Peter’s injunction to “Stand fast in the true grace of God.” This sums up his whole letter.

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 #12 1 Peter 5:1-14

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.
-

LIVING AS SHEPHERDS

1. **In verse 1, how many types of leader does Peter identify in the church to which he is writing?**
 2. **In verse 1, who will share in the glory of God that is soon to be revealed?**
 3. **Compare the "shepherds" of verse 2 with the "Chief Shepherd" of verse 4 and with John 10:1-14. Why are elders called shepherds, and what is their relationship as shepherds to Jesus?**
 4. **Verse 4 indicates that elders who persevere will receive a crown of glory, but James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10 indicate that every believer who suffers persecution is to receive a crown, so how does this verse particularly encourage elders?**
-

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Elders in the Church are not just older people, but men called by God in each local church to lead, teach and rule in it. Here Peter explains how they should conduct themselves, while in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 God's qualifications for elders are explained. Elders are sometimes called "Pastors" or even in some Bible translations "Bishops." Although it can be convenient to distinguish different roles for the various elders in a church, and although some church administrations are structured as if there are such differences, there is no biblical distinction between elders, pastors and (if you will!) bishops. As far as Peter is concerned, he claims no special "status" among the elders as a "fellow elder" (v 1), although his reference to being a "witness of Christ's sufferings" is a clear reference back to 1 Peter 1:1 where he identifies himself as an Apostle.

5. **Compare Hebrews 13:7 and 17 with 1 Peter 5:2,3. How would you describe the over-all nature of eldership in the church?**
6. **Peter lists three things elders need to avoid.**
 - a. **What are they?**
 - b. **What does Peter commend that counters each of these temptations?**
7. **How you respond to these directions for elders will depend on who you are!**
 - a. **If you are an elder, how can you encourage godly shepherding by yourself and your fellow elders?**
 - b. **If you are not an elder, how can you encourage your elders to be godly shepherds of the sort Peter describes? (See Hebrews 13:17 for help with your answer – but it is not the whole answer!)**

LIVING AS SHEEP

8. In verse 5,
 - a. Why does Peter particularly instruct the younger members of the church to be in submission to their elders?

 - b. What indicates that it is actually an issue for all believers?

 9. Looking at verses 5-7
 - a. How do we humble ourselves “under God’s mighty hand”?

 - b. In the context of this passage, in what way does God show favour to the humble?

 - c. In the context of this passage, what anxieties are we to “cast on him”?

 - d. How can we be cared for if the shepherds are failing?

 10. Looking at verses 8 & 9
 - a. In the context of this passage, in what way is the devil likely to devour you?

 - b. In the context of this passage, what spiritual strategies can we employ to resist the devil?

 - c. What encouragement does Peter give, and how does that fit with elders being willing to serve, younger Christians being in submission, and all of us resisting the devil?

 11. What, according to verse 10, has God done and what will God do?

 12. How does verse 11 sum up the whole letter?
-
13. In the light of this passage: What can you thank God for? What can you pray for others? What can you trust God for?

 14. In the light of this passage, what changes do you need to make: In your faith? In your worship? In your attitude? In your life?