



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 3:8-22

Peter seems to signal a change in this letter by beginning verse 8 with “Finally.” But in reality, he continues the same theme: live in harmony, love, be ready to suffer. By using “Finally” here, Peter is indicating that he is drawing the section of submission to a summary in the same way he began it: your salvation in Christ is to be worked out in life.

This section really is somewhat of a repetition of what he has written earlier. Why does he keep on with the same basic message? For two reasons: he must have seen it as important, and he must have seen it as an important response to the temptation to give up following Christ in the face of opposition.

This study covers a longer passage than most studies in this series, but these 15 verse really do need to be looked at together. In a reversal from the pattern we might be used to in New Testament letters, Peter first draws attention to the way of life believers should live (verse 8–17) then explains the theological reasons why this pattern of life is essential (verses 18–22). Without the foundation given in verses 18-22, the first section (verse 8-17) could be seen as simply a set of moral principles and rules, so don't stop at verse 17!

Before looking at these verse, review the way Peter has called the elect strangers who are scattered throughout the world to action: 1 Peter 1:13; 1:17; 1:22; 2:1,2; 2:1; 2:12; 2:13; 2:16,17; 2:18; 3:1; and 3:7. How many of these “calls to action” have no application for you? Now scan the same 3 ½ chapters for how often Christ is mentioned as the foundation for, the incentive to, and the means of persevering in living a faithful life.

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SCATTERED #9 1 Peter 3:8-22

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.

CHOSEN TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH OTHERS

1. According to verse 8, who are we especially to live in harmony with?
2. Verse 8 mentions 5 virtues that should be evident in Christian fellowship. List their *opposites* and suggest why these might be issues for Christians in a local church.
3. Considering John 13:34,35; Romans 12:10 & 13:8; 1 John 3:11 & 23; 4:7 & 11-12; and 2 John 5, what is the significance of the way we relate to other believers?
4. Verse 9 uses the word "blessing", which is contrasted with paying-back insults and injury, and is also linked to our inheritance. Are these the *same* blessing or *different* ones? Explain your answer.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

A Calling, an Inheritance and an Identity: Be careful! It is easy to read the quotation from Psalm 34 in verse 10 as promising a good life so long as you do good. But throughout this letter Peter has been teaching God's earth-bound strangers that we are called to suffering, even while we have an inheritance of blessing. If we read verse 10, (and Psalm 34) carefully, we see it doesn't promise a good life *if* we do good ... but it does say a good life will not be enjoyed *without* doing good! So we have a calling to suffering, an inheritance of blessing, and an identity of "good." It is this, not our religious activities, "Christian" jewellery or clothing, or Bible-talk, that marks us out in the world: even unbelieving spouses can we won to Christ without those! No obedience, holiness or purity, and none of the qualities of verses 8 & 9 are *conditions* of receiving our inheritance in Christ. Yet at the same time, **read 1 Corinthians 6:9:** *without them* you will not inherit God's kingdom. They are not what earns our inheritance, but they are necessary *markers of a believer's identity*, the "uniform" that belongs to us as believers made alive in Christ. It is as inconceivable we would be without them as that a living person would be without breath. They are the "uniform" which we were called to wear (verse 9). That's why, when Paul gives an almost identical list, he says we are to clothe ourselves in them – **read Colossians 3:12.**

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5. From verses 8-11, describe the Christian's "uniform," the things that Christians are to be identified by.
 6. In verses 10-12 Peter quotes Psalm 34 which uses "anthropomorphism": a metaphor in which God is said to act as if he has a body. Read Psalm 34:12-21, then explain what is meant by each metaphor:
 - a. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous." (2 Chronicles 16:9)
 - b. "His ears are attentive to their prayers."
 - c. "The face of the Lord is against those who do evil."
 7. Even though we can't *earn* God's blessing, what encouragements are there in verses 10-12 to do good?

CHOSEN TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH CHRIST

8. You would hope that the answer to Peter's question in verse 13 is, "No one." But we know that, sadly, there are some who harm those doing good. So ...
 - a. How does verse 14 show that Peter understands this?
 - b. Not many of us *feel* blessed when we suffer for doing good. What has Peter already said, and what follows (see verse 17 for example) shows how such suffering truly is a blessing?
9. Read Isaiah 8:12 (quoted in verse 14). Translations vary ... most refer to a "conspiracy" that causes fear among people.
 - a. What conspiracies – real or imagined – cause God's people to fear for their safety or security?
 - b. Why, according to Peter and Isaiah, should we not be frightened by such conspiracies?
10. Verse 15 is surely a key to this letter. Looking at it more closely ...
 - a. What does this verse reveal about the source of godly behaviour?
 - b. What is the link between "being prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks" and Christ set apart as Lord in the heart?
11. In the face of malice, how can we keep a clear conscience and what might its impact be (verse 16)?
12. Go through these verses and list everything that Christ has done for his people.
13. What about our behaviour and life does he pair up with each different example of Christ's work?
14. In verse 22, what demonstrates the complete exaltation of Christ, and how should that encourage us?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

In verse 19 Christ is said to have preached "to the spirits in prison" through the Spirit. This is likely an allusion to preaching to the unbelievers (who are now imprisoned in hell) in Noah's day. **In verse 21** Peter alludes to "baptism that now saves you." Baptism is a symbol of salvation, a "washing" that doesn't make a person clean, but assures believers' consciences of their having been made clear through Christ. Please read the *Additional Note "Preaching to the Spirits in Prison & Baptism that Saves"* linked to this study: <https://tinyurl.com/yxd8w5xe>

15. In the light of this passage: What can you thank God for? What can you pray for others? What can you trust God for?
16. 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?