

## THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST

May 14, 2017

### The Lord's Supper

**“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” I Peter 3:18**

Peter wrote “to the strangers scattered throughout” Asia Minor (1:1), the region known today as Turkey. They were “strangers scattered” because they fled from persecution and were scattered throughout lands where they were strangers. Suffering was their norm, and Peter wrote much to them regarding suffering.

He assured them that their suffering did not jeopardize their “inheritance incorruptible” (1:4), and that the “trial of [their] faith” was more precious than gold, for it would “be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1:7), whereas gold would perish. He stressed that patient suffering for doing right is acceptable with God, that therein they followed Christ, who “suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (2:20-21).

He explained that “it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing” (3:17), and presented Christ as the foremost example of suffering, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (3:18). As we prepare to receive the Lord's Supper, let us observe five elements of this text;

**1. “Christ also . . . suffered.”** “Christ” signifies God's anointed, the One God has chosen above all others for unrivaled majesty and ministry. Peter affirms that this One of all-surpassing dignity suffered also. In this fact readers can find comfort amid the indignities they suffer. He too suffered, and suffered unjustly. Our traumas shrink by virtue of His identity and suffering.

**2. “Christ . . . hath once suffered.”** Peter presents Christ's suffering as purposeful, “that he might bring us to God,” and the inclusion of “once” affirms that the purpose has been accomplished. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once** in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . **Christ was once offered** to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:24-26, 28).

**3. “Christ . . . suffered for sins.”** As familiar as one may become with this truth, it is still shocking. God's most beloved and desired suffered. Most astounding, He suffered for sins. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (II Corinthians 5:21a).

**4. “The just for the unjust.”** Well-deserved is the suffering of sinners. But suffering by the “Just One” (Acts 7:52), and that for the sins of the “unjust,” will amaze the redeemed forever.

**5. “That he might bring us to God.”** The suffering of the Just One focused upon one objective: “that he might bring us to God.” He suffered “that we might be made the righteousness of God in

him” (II Corinthians 21b). Let us ponder this God-designed, God-wrought wonder, and worship the God of grace for bringing us into His favor through the suffering of His Son.