

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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## Once-For-All Sacrifice

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## Once-For-All Sacrifice

### Abstract

"Christ cares about us in spite of our inadequacy; he loves us so much, in fact, that he made the ultimate sacrifice for us."

Posting about walking in the joy of Christ's resurrection from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<http://inallthings.org/once-for-all-sacrifice/>

### Keywords

In All Things, lectionary, Christ, sacrifice, Holy Week

### Disciplines

Christianity

### Comments

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

# Once-For-All Sacrifice

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 [inallthings.org /once-for-all-sacrifice/](https://allthings.org/once-for-all-sacrifice/)

Justin Vander Werff

## Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 36:5-11](#)

[Isaiah 42:1-9](#)

[John 12:1-11](#)

[Hebrews 9:11-15](#)

Today, we are in the early stages of “Holy Week,” as church calendars typically denote it. This terminology is curious, if you think about it, because we are just as unholy this week as we are the other 51 weeks of the year, and Christ is just as holy this week as He always has been and always will be throughout all eternity.

Still, it is worthwhile to reflect briefly on traditional church practices around Holy Week. The season of Lent is a time of particular and directed attention toward our sin and our need for a Savior. This season points ahead to the activities later this week, where we likely have a worship service that focuses in a particular way on Christ’s ultimate, “good” sacrifice. Then, on Resurrection Sunday, we will celebrate Christ’s ultimate victory over sin and death. This whole several-week process is really just a long, drawn-out version of what we hopefully see and experience every Sunday in corporate worship. Typical worship services on any given Sunday likely include calling us to confess our sin and pointing us toward Christ’s sacrifice for us. These worship services occur on Sunday, every Sunday, as weekly celebrations of Christ’s resurrection on a Sunday nearly 2000 years ago. So, this particular week, Holy Week, simply reinforces what we know, believe, and celebrate every week of the year.

Isaiah 42 presents a similar pattern of sin and humility, salvation in Christ, and confidence in his power. The previous chapter ends with the futility of man-made attempts at salvation, in particular the worthlessness of metal idols and their complete inability to do anything to rescue Israel from its desperate condition. But Isaiah doesn’t wallow in that hopelessness. Instead, he points to Christ, “my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights.”

We recognize that in that statement we are hearing the Lord’s voice. He has chosen Christ and delights in him, and he points Isaiah and us to Christ as our only hope. We, of course, have an even greater view of this hope than Isaiah did, since we live in the age after Christ’s sacrifice. In Hebrews 9:12, we read “[Christ] entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.” Christ’s sacrifice was once-for-all sufficient for all times and for all God’s people. Isaiah prophesied in the hope of the Messiah, while physically experiencing only the blood of goats and calves in the Old Testament sacrifices. But we have seen a much fuller picture of the Lord’s salvation story.

As Isaiah’s prophesy continues, we read, “a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench.” Christ will support, and does support, the feeble and frail. He cares about us in spite of our inadequacy; he loves us so much, in fact, that he made the ultimate sacrifice for us.

The knowledge of Christ’s love for us is even more comforting when considered in light of the remainder of this portion of Isaiah’s prophecy. Beginning in verse 5, we see a confident reminder of the Lord’s creative and sustaining power over the whole universe and everything in it. Continuing, we read that Christ, in this confidence and power, is “a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind”. And we are reminded that Christ alone is the source of our confidence. Christ is powerful over all creation, yet he cares enough to open our eyes, to love us, in spite of our sinfulness, feebleness, and frailty.

As we walk through this week, let’s be reminded that every week is Holy Week, and every week we have the privilege of knowing and living the pattern that Isaiah laid out for us. We walk in humble awareness of our sin and

our great need for salvation. We walk in gratitude for Christ's once-for-all sacrifice on the cross. And we walk in the joy and power of Christ's resurrection. With the Spirit at work in us, may we walk this walk and talk this talk.