

# Once For All

Lenten Devotions 2025

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*Note: Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the English Standard Version.*

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## First Week of Lent — Monday, March 10

*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it ... how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation. It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (Hebrews 2:1, 3-4)*

### **Hope for Drifters**

You may have heard it said that when there is a “therefore” in Scripture, you should understand what it is there for. Here it refers back to Hebrews chapter 1, which summarizes Christ’s redemptive work and emphasizes the uniqueness and sufficiency of Jesus. The Hebrews Christians know the story. Perhaps some of them had personally met, heard and even spoken with the Lord while He walked the streets of Palestine. Maybe some of them were among the “more than 500” who saw the Lord alive after His resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15:6).

All the more tragic, then, if they were to drift away from their faith, if they were to disregard this wonderful salvation that had changed their lives.

It seems that some legalistic Jews were teaching that these new believers needed to maintain the temple rites and sacrifices. This must have caused great confusion and doubt in their minds. Were the ongoing offerings necessary for atonement? Had they done the right thing when they trusted Christ?

To encourage them, the author reminds them of the reasons why they believe in Christ: The Lord Himself declared His identity as “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6); many eye-witnesses testified to what they had seen and heard; God Himself affirmed Christ as the Messiah through myriad miracles; the Holy Spirit and His gifts had been freely poured out.

Here is hope for drifters, which sometimes includes you and me when we experience doubts or disappointments on our faith journey. We can remind ourselves of the truths we have in God’s Word, recorded by reliable witnesses and verified by awesome displays of God’s power. And, especially, we can reply upon the Holy Spirit, who comforts us, teaches us, and reassures us of all Jesus said and did (see John 16:26). If

you fear you are drifting, remember these things, and take heart—the Holy Spirit will hold you securely.

**Holy Spirit, Keep me from drifting. Ground me in the truth. Hold me fast. Amen.**

Tuesday, March 11

*“What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.” (Hebrews 2:6-8a)*

### **Who Am I?**

Do you ever feel small? Perhaps when gazing up at the Milky Way on a dark summer evening or viewing the grandeur of a snow-capped mountain peak?

The writer of Psalm 8, quoted in our verse for today, knew that feeling: “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (Psalm 8:3-4).

This reminds me of a scene from ancient Israel. God’s people have assembled the necessary supplies that will be used in building the temple—gold, silver, precious jewels, rare and beautiful fabrics, etc. When they gathered for a dedication ceremony, King David prayed, “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength. O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you?” (1 Chronicles 29:11-14 NLT).

I guess King David felt small. He certainly felt humble and undeserving. How true for us also! The verses we have read so far in Hebrews have emphasized the greatness of Christ—His divine nature, His majesty, and, especially, His great care for us that moved Him to offer Himself in our place on the cross.

Indeed, how small we might feel—but, oh, how loved!

**Oh, Lord, Who am I that You should love me so? I worship You. Amen.**

Wednesday, March 12

*We do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:8b-9)*

### **Look to Jesus**

“What do you see?” Have you ever been asked that question? Perhaps while peering at an eye chart in the optometrist’s office or when Grandma shows you a 60-year-old picture in black and white. What we see depends on what we know. If we know which way the giant “E” is facing, we can respond accurately. If we know who that pretty, young girl is in Grandma’s picture, we can tell her she sure was a charmer!

Today’s reading tells us there are things we don’t see—not yet anyway. We don’t see all of creation subjected to Christ. We don’t see all people bowing the knee and declaring Him Lord. We don’t see Christ on heaven’s throne. No, not yet.

What we do see, and what we know for sure, is that through His suffering and death He tasted death once for all—for you and for me, for all who have ever lived or will ever live. With believers of all ages, we look to the cross and remember. We gaze in the tomb and see that He is not there.

We also look ahead to what we don’t see yet but most assuredly will see one day. “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever. And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’” (Revelation 21:1-5a NLT)

**Dear Jesus, Keep my eyes on You and my hope focused on the day when I will see You face to face. Amen.**

Thursday, March 13

*For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.... In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. (Hebrews 2:10 & 5:7-8)*

### **Perfect through Suffering**

I've often been confused by these verses. They raise questions for me. Why would Jesus need to be made perfect, when He is perfect already?

The Greek word "*teleios*" indicates a perfection that is related to the purpose for which a thing or person is designed. Through His suffering and death, Jesus fulfilled—completely, perfectly—the purpose for which He had come into the world. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17).

Another question I wonder about: Why would Jesus need to learn obedience when He lived His whole life obediently committed to the Father's plan for mankind's redemption?

We all know there is a difference between deciding to act in a certain way and then actually doing so when the rubber hits the road. Today's reading makes me think about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. There He suffered in ways so excruciating that His sweat was like drops of blood. Despite all that—and knowing the additional suffering that awaited Him—He said "yes" to the Father's plan. He had indeed been committed to the Father's will all along, but now He was facing the reality of all it involved. He walked into it. He faced it. He did not turn back.

What a wonderful Savior!

**Dear Lord Jesus, Thank You for humbly, obediently, fully walking to Your death to give me life. Amen.**

Friday, March 14

*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, this is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.... He had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Hebrews 2:14-18)*

## **Like You and Me**

“Since the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things.” This is the mystery of the Incarnation. The eternal One entered time and space, setting aside His royal robe to cloak Himself in human form. In other words, He became like you and me—weak, vulnerable, human. Yes, human, but perfectly holy, without one iota of sin of any kind.

His earthly life shows us how God intended human beings to live before the dreadful fall into sin: loving the Heavenly Father, enjoying God’s beautiful world, serving others and helping them thrive. In His humanness, Jesus is an example of a God-centered, flourishing life.

But He is so much more; He is our merciful and faithful High Priest. He walked among the fallen to raise us up. He lived among the slaves of sin to set us free from sin’s penalty and from sin’s power. He came to those destined to die and purchased for us eternal life.

Although Jesus is our victorious Savior, He still understands what it means to be human. He feels for us. He knows what it is like to be tempted, and He is able—more than able—to help us.

**Living Lord, It comforts me to know You understand my struggles with sin and temptation. Thank you for delivering me from them every time. Amen.**