

The Representative Principle

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[0 : 00] As a young girl, Rosella Bentley attended a Roman Catholic grade school.! And she told us how seeing the crucifix on the wall made her cry to see Jesus suffering! and dying. And she didn't understand why he had to suffer and die.

Well, at the invitation of Dick and David, she came to the church and she came to understand that Jesus was dying to pay the price for sinners, salvation.

And that's what she came to believe and to put her trust in and was saved and baptized here and then died during COVID and has gone to meet her Savior and to thank Him face to face for having suffered and died for her.

You see, it's not enough just to know and believe that Jesus died on the cross. A crucifix will tell you that. Pilate knew that.

The Sanhedrin knew that. The scribes and Pharisees knew that. The mocking crowd that cried, crucify Him, knew He suffered and died. There's no saving benefit that comes from believing the mere fact that Jesus died on the cross.

[1 : 21] No, there was something more happening at the cross that was not seen with the human eye. Something that a crucifix or pictures of the cross will never teach anybody.

The cross is not self-interpreting as if to see it is to understand it. No, if we're to understand the saving power of Christ and Him crucified, we must be taught from the scriptures.

The Bible interprets Calvary for us and tells us that God was punishing His own Son in the place of His people.

And trusting in that is what won our salvation. That's what won our salvation and that's what gives saving merit to this once for all, absolutely unique death on the cross.

The death of Christ for His people. That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. The righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God. That's the object of saving faith.

[2 : 28] Christ in Him crucified as our sin bearer. And so to rightly understand what was happening at the cross, it's helpful to understand what could be called the representative principle.

It's found throughout God's Word and it was active at Calvary's middle cross. And it's that that gives saving value to His death. So what is this representative principle?

Well, in short, it is one acting on behalf of others. One representing the others on whose behalf he's acting.

Now, fortunately, we're very familiar with the representative principle because our form of government operates on that basis. This past month, an important vote was taken on funding our government for the next three months.

Now, none of you went to Washington, D.C. to cast your vote. But you did have a vote. It was through your representative, Rudy Yaakum, who represents your voice in Congress.

[3 : 41] When he voted, he wasn't just voting as an individual, but as a representative person voting for those in his constituency, those he represented.

In other words, his vote was your vote. His vote was my vote. And that's how representative government works. One acting on behalf of others.

And if you don't like the way that they represent you, well, then you can try to vote him out the next two years, or if it's a senator, six years, or a president, four years. But that's the way it works.

The representative acts on behalf of those he represents. Now, this wasn't invented by those who wrote our Constitution 250 years ago.

It wasn't invented by the Roman Senate 2,000 years ago. It was invented by God himself. And I want you to see it operating in four places in the Scriptures. In the garden, in the valley, in the wilderness, and at Golgotha.

[4 : 46] So, we're looking at this representative principle. First of all, in the Garden of Eden. Sinless Adam was put in the Garden of Eden, and he was put on trial there by his Creator, Lord.

You're free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die. If he disobeyed, he would bring condemnation and death upon himself.

If he obeyed, he would be confirmed in life forever. And you know, the devil tempted Eve, and through her tempted Adam, and he ate the forbidden fruit, inheriting not eternal life, but condemnation and death.

And not just physical death, but spiritual death. Death toward God. Separation from God. And yes, that second death of eternal separation from God in the lake of fire.

But Adam was not on trial for himself alone in the garden. From God's viewpoint and God's perspective, Adam was the representative head of all his descendants, of the whole human race that was to come forth from his loins.

[5 : 59] He was representing us then. He was on trial for us. He was acting for us, voting for us. So when he fell, we fell. My grandchildren like to get piggyback rides when they come to Grandpa's house.

I mean, they live down here and see your kneecaps all the time. And I like to put them up here high. And we tramp around the house like a horse galloping. Kids, what would happen if Grandpa fell, tripped over a toy and fell flat?

Well, who's ever riding on my shoulders would fall as well. And that's what happened in the garden to the representative, Adam.

It's as if the whole human race was piggybacked on Adam. And when Adam fell, the whole human race fell in their father, Adam.

So when he sinned, we sinned. We sinned in Adam, our representative in the garden. And that's the Bible's explanation why all people since Adam die.

[7 : 14] Because we've all sinned. Sinned in Adam. Therefore, since Adam, all men die. Now, the book of Romans, we saw it this morning, the earlier verses, but taking up in verse 12 of Romans 5 and on to the end, we see this principle of representation going on.

Verse 12 of Romans 5. Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man. So who was the one man? Adam.

Adam. And sin got into this perfect world through the one man, Adam. And death through sin. So sin didn't enter by itself.

As the door was opened and sin entered, he brought death in to this world too. So sin entered the world through one man and death through sin. And in this way, through the one man's sin, death came to all men.

Because all sinned. When did they sin? They sinned in Adam. Their representative. And he goes on to say in verse 14, so death reigned from the time of Adam.

[8 : 37] From the time, the moment of his sin, death reigned in the world. Verse 15. The many died by the trespass of the one.

Verse 16. The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation. Verse 17. By the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man.

Verse 18. Consequently, just as the result of the one trespass was condemnation for all men. Not just for Adam, but for his whole posterity.

Verse 19. Justice through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners. Paul takes up the same theme in 1 Corinthians 15.

Death came through a man, verse 21 says. As in Adam. Verse 22. As in Adam, all die.

[9 : 38] So we come into this world, every one of us, in Adam. He's our head. He's our representative. We're part of his offspring.

And because Adam represented us in the garden, we all come into this world as spiritual stillborns. Spiritually dead in transgressions and sins.

We're all born sinners going astray from the womb, speaking lies. So as Adam's offspring, we all have inherited from our first father two things.

A bad heart. A sinful nature. That's hostile toward God. That will not submit to his law. Romans 8, 7. And that's why we all, like sheep, have gone astray.

We've turned everyone to his own way. With our backs toward God. Why? Because we got from Adam a bad heart. A straying heart. Every one of us.

[10 : 38] Maybe you've seen those toys that you wind up and then set on the table and they zoom off somewhere. Every one of us, as soon as our feet hit the ground, we went astray telling lies. So that goes back to our representative.

We got a bad heart. And 10 out of 10 go astray. Because we got that straying heart from Adam. And he also gave us a bad record.

Guilt for our sin. Condemnation. Death. We read it over and over. But you might say, well, I didn't vote to have Adam be my representative.

Well, we might vote in our country for who represents us, but it doesn't work that way in God's world. He's the sovereign king. And he determined that Adam, the first man, would be the representative for all that would come after him.

But I didn't vote for God either. The Bible's answer is, who are you, oh man, to answer back to God? He's the king. His dominion is forever. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing.

[11 : 47] He does all he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say, what are you doing? What have you done? He's not accountable to anyone outside of himself.

So, we need to be careful not to complain that we had Adam as our representative. Because it will be by the same representative principle that we poor sinners will be saved by a different representative.

A different representative. And if you want to scrap the one, you've got to scrap the other. They stand or fall together in Romans chapter 5. And we'll see that in a minute.

Besides, we confirm Adam's decision many times every day of our life. Every time we sin, we're saying we would have voted the same way. So, that's the representative principle operating in the Garden of Eden.

Secondly, we want to see it illustrated in the Valley of Elah. This is 1 Samuel 17. You remember, there's the Valley of Elah and on one side is the Philistine army and on the other side is the Israelite army.

[12 : 56] And then, they're lined up in their battle array and then a giant from the Philistines, Goliath, stands forth and says, choose a man to come out and fight me.

If your man wins, we will be your slaves for life. If I win, you all will be our slaves for life. And all the Israelites fled to their tents, scared to death.

happened every morning and evening for 40 days as Israel's faith was being tried. And then David sent his little boy, I'm sorry, David's father sent David to see how his older brothers in the army were doing, take them some food.

And he arrives and he hears Goliath mocking the God of the Israelite army and he offers to go and fight the giant. This is a clear illustration of the representative principle in operation.

Can you see it? Instead of them all fighting and killing each other in the battle, let's just let the two representatives have it out and they will determine the outcome for all the rest.

[14 : 08] Each one is the representative of their whole army. So if you're an Israelite soldier and you're watching David go fight Goliath, well, you're not watching like a bored spectator with little interest in the outcome.

No, if David wins, we win. But if he loses, we lose big time. So this representative principle is operating here.

He represented the whole army. The one acting on behalf of the other and his victory indeed was Israel's victory. So that's the principle there in the Valley of Elah.

Thirdly, that sets the scene then for the third example of this representative principle. It's seen in the wilderness in Palestine. A hundred years later, David's greater son, Jesus Christ, is coming up out of the Jordan River where he's been baptized by John the Baptist and immediately he's driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for 40 days and 40 nights.

Here in the wilderness is heaven's David, Jesus Christ, and he's locked in a one-on-one combat with hell's Goliath, the devil, Satan.

[15 : 32] The two representatives, you see, of the two sides of this great cosmic war are having it out. And as goes the winner, so goes the people who are represented by these representative men.

Now remember, back in the garden, the first representative man, Adam, lost the battle with Satan's temptation, didn't he? And that plunged us all into sin and death and condemnation.

But when all was sin and shame, the second Adam to the rescue came. And that's what we're looking at next. 1 Corinthians 15, 45, and 47 tell us that Jesus has come into the world as the last Adam, as the second man who is from heaven.

You see, according to God, it's like there's just these two men. There was the first Adam and there is the second, the last Adam. And all of man's destiny is based upon which one represents them.

Adam, the first, or Adam, the second, Jesus Christ. Well, the first Adam represented all of us. He lost.

[16 : 45] We lost in Adam. But now a second man, a second Adam, a last Adam has come to represent all of his offspring given to him by his father.

He's come to take on the prince of darkness and his temptation in a hand-to-hand combat for 40 days and 40 nights. And that wasn't the end of it. That's just the beginning after his baptism.

But the devil dogged his heels all the way through his life until his death. And as you and I watch Jesus being tempted, we're not just sitting back as idle spectators past the popcorn and drinks.

No, no. No. If Jesus sins once, we're damned forever. Oh, but if he obeys perfectly, we win eternal life based on his victory.

His victory will be our victory. And because he didn't fall to Adam or to Satan's temptation, but always did what pleased the Father, rendering a perfect obedience, therefore he has a perfect righteousness to give to us who had none of our own.

[18 : 07] Where the first Adam failed, the last Adam succeeded, the first Adam disobeyed, the last Adam obeyed. The first man of earth was defeated, the second man from heaven triumphed.

And therefore, we stand justified, righteous before God in our representative Jesus Christ. We were all born in Adam, born sinners, born dead and condemned.

But by sovereign grace, we've been born again into Christ with a new nature inherited from him. A sinful nature inherited from Adam, the first, a new nature inherited from the second Adam in the new birth.

In Adam, we got a bad heart. In Christ, we get a new heart. Made alive in Christ, even when we were dead in trespasses and sin. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation.

Christ, the covenant representative of his people, promises, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I'll remove from you your heart of stone and put into you a heart of flesh pliable to his will.

[19 : 28] So, what was lost in Adam is regained in Christ, the second Adam. But what about the condemnation?

The death that we inherited from the first Adam? Well, we saw that. The result of one trespass was condemnation for all men. What about that condemnation?

Well, that brings us lastly and fourthly to the middle cross of Belgotha. Here's where we see the resolution. Here we see what happened to that curse, that condemnation that fell on us because we were in Adam.

Here the representative principle is also active and in a big way because the Lord is not being crushed by God's wrath for his own sins, for he had none.

But he was bruised for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. And the punishment that brought him peace was on us and by his wounds. We are healed.

[20 : 31] Remember, we were under the condemnation of Adam, our failed representative. But on the cross, the last Adam took our place. He was there for us.

He was our representative acting on our behalf. The shepherd was dying for sheep that loved to wander. And so, we come back to Romans chapter 5 and we see these two representative men, the first Adam and the last Adam.

And each statement about the first Adam and what we inherited from him because of his sin is matched for those who are in Christ with another statement of what we now inherit being in Christ from our representative, the last Adam.

So, Romans 5, 16 and 17, the judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift of God followed many trespasses and brought justification.

Verse 18, just as the result of the one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

[21 : 46] That is all men who are in Christ. Verse 19, for just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

You may not like the idea of being condemned because of Adam's disobedience, but it's by the same representative principle that you will be saved by Christ's obedience.

repentance. Deny the one, you deny the other. I won't have it. I won't have this idea of someone acting on my behalf. I want to stand on my own.

Be careful because if Christ doesn't act as your representative, you're lost forever. And so we see the beauty, the heart of God revealed in giving us a second Adam.

When all was sin and shame, he sent a second Adam and he came to the rescue and acted on our behalf. So let's just think again before we take the elements tonight, what was happening on the middle cross and who was hanging on it?

[23 : 01] The cross was the place of judgment. That's the place where God is punishing sin. It's his holy hatred and wrath, undiluted, undiminished, poured out against sin.

It's the equivalent of hell coming to Calvary that day and falling on the one who is there. And who is there on the middle cross?

The holy, blameless, pure, Son of God who never sinned once in thought, word, motive, deed done, deed left undone.

And if we understand these two things, then we must stand amazed at the foot of the cross and ask, what is someone like him doing in a place like this?

Why is the innocent one suffering the condemnation and death of sinners? sinners. And the Bible tells us, oh, this is the last Adam sent by the Father in heaven and he's acting on behalf of all his people, not dying as a mere individual, but as the covenant head and representative of all that the Father has given him so that his victory is our victory.

[24 : 29] His death is our death. In my place condemned he stood, we say. Can you say that? In my place condemned he's acting, but he's acting for me.

He was acting for you who know him too. I need no other argument. I need no other plea. It is enough.

It is enough that Jesus died and that he died for me. End of argument. If he did that for me, then I inherit eternal life. that Jesus died.

that Jesus died. that Jesus died. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why not? Because he was condemned for the others. I am in Christ.

How did I get into Christ? By faith. I was given a new heart to turn from my wicked way and to cast myself upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ to cry with that sinner in the temple, God be merciful to me, a sinner, because of what Jesus has done.

[25 : 32] and I was united to Christ. He, my representative, acted on my behalf. His death was mine, that his life might also be mine.

Do you know, that's why many, as soon as Jesus died, Matthew tells us, the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life and came out of their tombs and appeared to many.

Demonstrating that this death of the representative of his people, that death had been on their behalf, winning eternal life for them.

The one was acting on behalf of them. They came rising right up out of their graves, demonstrating, yes, he was their representative and by his death he purchased life for all of his own.

I heard of a group of Christian tourists who were in the Holy Land and the tour guide took the group to a site where they thought, they think, that Jesus was crucified in Golgotha, the place of a skull.

[26 : 48] And one believer said to the guide, well, I've been here before. And the guide said, well, when was that? And he answered, 2,000 years ago. For I was crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me and the life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

You see, he was acting for me that day, 2,000 years ago, and I was in Christ, crucified with Christ. His death is my death and therefore I have no condemnation to fear but only eternal life to enjoy with Christ who loved me and gave himself for me.

You see, for me, that's the language of the representative principle, the one acting for the others, for me. For me, kind Jesus, was thine incarnation, thy mortal sorrow and thy life's oblation, thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion for my salvation.

So who's your representative tonight? What have you inherited from them? Well, we all were in Adam as we came into the world. We inherited eternal damnation.

Damnation. Have you got into Christ yet? Or will Adam be your only representation, your only representative? You will show up in the day of heaven with no representative.

[28 : 30] We heard it this morning. None to say to you, he's mine, she's mine. Oh, but if by repentance and faith we get into Christ, we know for sure he was our representative on the cross, in the garden, in the wilderness, being tempted, in Gethsemane, on Golgotha.

And yes, he will be our representative too. He is right now representing us before the Father's throne. And he will represent us in the last day of judgment when he says, Father, here I am and the children you have given me.

This one's mine. Thank God for the cross. Thank God that it was more than what could be seen with the human eye.

The power of the cross to save is found in this representative principle. It was Christ in my place. And yes,