

TUTORIAL

2.3

We have a new, Righteous Representative

This tutorial looks at the first Adam, in light of the second - the Lord Jesus Christ. When God looks at us, He sees our new righteous representative.

The portions of Scripture referred to in this tutorial are: **Genesis 1:27-28, 3:7,21, Matthew 28:18-20.**

Last time

We looked back briefly at God's Account of the *beginning*. We reminded ourselves of how wonderful it is for us, His children, to know that our eternal Father has always existed, and that He made everything in the universe. Each part of the Trinity - Father, Son and Spirit - was involved in Creation, just as they are each involved in our lives. In the same way that creation was entirely initiated by God, saving us and making us into new people - a new creation - is something God planned and brought about. He's fully committed to seeing our lives become what He designed them to be.

Created for responsibility and authority

The Genesis account goes on to describe God's intention of creating a being that would bear the imprint of His - God's - own self. Because we are created, finite and dependent, for us, the desire to make something is always associated with some kind of need. But as we've noted a number of times, God's decision to create a race of beings to whom He could relate in a special way was not to fulfill anything He was lacking. He did not create a race of beings who could know Him, or who had the emotions to love, the will to obey and the capacity to worship Him, because He needed any of those things.

So this was an act of grace. To even exist, for us, is evidence of His grace - His kindness and favor that has nothing to do with merit. It's ridiculous to think that we might somehow *earn* the right to exist. But even more than this...not only did He create a specially favored race in His image, but He also gave them real responsibility and authority (Genesis 1:27-28). Built into what it is to be human He placed the capacity and potential to reproduce, to bring into the world others who bear the image of God. And He gave them - and through them, *us* - the enormous responsibility of managing the earth that He'd created. They and

we were to be His representatives, directly responsible to Him, but with very real delegated authority.

Throughout the Old Testament Narrative we see many examples of God giving real responsibility and authority to His people. Then, as the Narrative continues, there's a lot of focus on how God's children under the New Covenant are given the ability and amazing privilege of being involved in His purposes. Clearly this is something extremely important to God, and another example of His grace. To be created in the image of God means that we're designed specifically to participate in what He's doing, what's important to Him. So when a human being focuses their thoughts, time and energy on something else, they're not fulfilling the very thing for which they were made. To state it in the positive: when someone is giving themselves to the purposes closest to God's heart, they are truly alive.

But of course, Adam and Eve were willingly deceived and aligned themselves with Satan who intends to overthrow God's rule. Now the race created by God to share with Him in His purposes had turned their backs on that privilege and - without fully realizing it - had aligned themselves with the Enemy, the Usurper.

Continuing to use God-given ingenuity down through history the human race has, of course, discovered and achieved a great deal. But without God's guidance and His purposes in focus, a lot of what man has done has also proved to be disastrous.

A new representative was chosen

Adam disqualified himself from the position God had appointed him to as caretaker over the created earth. His delegated authority was withdrawn. But God had no intention of allowing Satan a victory. The first representative of the human race had failed, a new one must be found. Someone who would be worthy to take the responsibility and bear authority in God's purposes.

At the moment when God was describing the terrible ramifications of Adam and Eve's sin, He also promised that someone would be sent to defeat Satan and restore man to the place God had intended for him. We know, of course, that in time He did come. And it was God's Son, born a human being, Jesus. He would be called *the Christ* - specially designated by God as His great Prophet, the final High Priest and the eternal King.

In the New Testament, one of God's designated storytellers, Paul, will call Jesus "*the second Adam*", the new man, the new head of God's family, representing His people before God. Unlike the first Adam, Jesus refused to listen to the Usurper. At enormous cost He put God's Purpose first and won the victory that had been promised in the dark day of the Fall. After Jesus bore our sin on the cross and then was raised back to life, He told His disciples that God

had given Him all authority in heaven and earth. The first, only human, representative man, Adam, did have delegated authority on earth. But the authority of this second representative man, Jesus Christ, eclipses that completely. He has authority as God's Son in heaven and as God's appointed representative on earth.

We've already reflected on the fact that from the beginning God intended for His people to have the capacity and authority to be part of His Purposes. Jesus, the second Adam, made it possible again for God's people to fulfill the thing for which they were created. Immediately after asserting His authority, Jesus tells His disciples that they're to go out through the whole world telling people about Him and leading them to become His followers (Matthew 28:18-20). This is the great Rescue that Jesus came to the earth to initiate. And now, just before returning to God the Father in Heaven, He appoints - or *commissions* - His people under the new Covenant to join Him in this effort. Adam's role - and by extension ours - was originally to be caretakers of the earth. Now, Jesus' role - and by extension ours - is to share His great Narrative with people everywhere on the earth. The Narrative that culminates in the amazing News that on the cross, Jesus has solved the dilemma of sin and death.

Clothed in Christ's righteousness

The first time through the Narrative we noted how after their sin, Adam and Eve suddenly experienced shame. Where before it had not entered their minds to cover their bodies, they now felt exposed and guilty. Their relationship to the world around them, to each other, and most significantly to God, was now totally changed; corrupted (Genesis 3:7).

God rejected their pathetic efforts to cover themselves with leaves...only *He* could provide what would be satisfactory. Some of the animals they'd originally had under their supervision had to die. The Narrative says that God made clothes for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). He provided the covering for the shame and guilt that had now come between Him and His image bearers. This provides a powerful metaphor for what God has done for us through Jesus' death. Every pathetic attempt of our own to deal with our guilt was doomed to fail...and only made it worse, in fact.

But God sent His Son who gladly died in our place. He took our guilt and shame on Himself. As an act of grace - we certainly can't do anything to earn this - God has covered us with the righteousness of Jesus.

When God looked at Adam and Eve, He could see the skins of the animals that died to temporarily hide their guilt. Now, when He looks at us, He sees the obedience, the perfection and the purity of His Son who He said pleased Him completely. And that won't ever change. The way He sees us now is entirely

independent of what we have done, and, remarkably, anything we will do. His view of us doesn't change with how we feel.

We're going to highlight other places where the Narrative reinforces this incredible reality. And later, in the New Testament, we'll see that a lot of attention is given to this. One reason is because God knows that we are very quick to forget. The old habit of trying to find some way to deal with our guilt and our feelings of shame are very deeply ingrained. But He wants us to live in the freedom that comes from knowing that it has been completely and finally dealt with. We can live without guilt before Him because He always sees us in Christ...and that can never change.



DISCUSSION POINTS

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1. Reflect on what it means to you to have a delegated authority as a representative and witness of Jesus. How does that play out as you interact with people who are not believers? How do you see this authority you have from Him working alongside any other God-given authority in your life (e.g. your church)?
2. In your experience, do many Christians live with a clear sense of their guilt being completely dealt with by what Jesus accomplished at Calvary? Have you heard many people talk about, or much teaching about, the fact that we as believers are hidden in Christ's righteousness? What are some of the things you feel are the results of us truly understanding and living in the light of this?