

Representational Crisis Part One
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- 1) Trials, hardship, and suffering can induce a representational crisis: that is, the examination of the situation and how to correctly (biblically) represent it.
- 2) There are different ways to handle a representational crisis:
 - Call it all wrong
 - Refuse to deal with it
 - Endure it with hope
 - Don't look back upon it if better days come
- 3) Any generalization from Scripture corresponds to the consistent character of God. Our question should be: Are my generalizations about my crisis correspond to what the Bible says about a God who is always there and who is involved in my crisis?
- 4) We ask, "Is God actually as He is represented in Scripture, as waves of contradictory representations come in waves at us? What is believable, faithful, true?"
- 5) Experience from the past is useful in one sense (for instance, we remember that we parked the car in the garage so we know where to find it.) Reason has a distinct function to lead us to conclusions.
- 6) But "faith" in general isn't always useful or helpful. The Aztecs, for instance, had great faith in their own religion.
- 7) Revelation is different than general "faith," and also different than common sense. When God told Adam and Eve not to eat from the forbidden tree, He wasn't asking them to rely on their own experience.
- 8) Why, then, are we apt to accept some representations of reality and not others?
- 9) Psalm 19 speaks of saturating oneself in the Word of God as a protection for the mind.
- 10) The Bible teaches that some representations of situations are righteous and some are foolish.
- 11) But in a crisis, we are faced with clashes of representations.
- 12) There is a sequence in revelation: God gives revelation (the Bible), which comes to bear on the human mind, and from that information we are expected to generalize in order to correctly represent our present circumstances.

- 13) This sequence often clashes with experience and with reason.
- 14) Any teaching of a representational nature has to resolve the representational crisis, where generalizations go up against all other representational forms (generalizing from personal experience or from reasoning processes.)
- 15) The power of God's effect on a situation has to be evident. He has to "show up" in our lives.
- 16) The sequence would go: God to revelation to the mind to generalizations (which are linguistic forms) to the power of God (that is, His action in the material world in response to our generalizing from Scripture.)
- 17) In such an "open case," a generalization is more than just words, it is part of a continuum. It stays an open case until the power of God punctuates the sequence.
- 18) In the Bible, all these continua are formally closed. However, as we look at them, it seems our situations seem "open" because they are not resolved. Often situations can endure for years and even decades without the power of God "showing up."
- 19) In such situations, the passage of time is not itself punctuational: in other words, it does not bring a situation to resolution. What troubles us, many times, is the fact that our own continuum may not have a punctuation.
- 20) In fact, our own crisis may be such because we yearn for some sort of punctuation to it, and chafe against the open nature of it.
- 21) In the faith procedure, we choose to think and represent the crisis a certain way, anticipating the future action of God as punctuation. Sometimes this time of expectation can make the waiting even harder.
- 22) Yet the Bible urges us to expect the help and intervention of God in our lives.
- 23) "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life" (Proverbs 13:12.) This scripture speaks of the difficulty of the unpunctuated crisis.
- 24) The problem is more acute when there are a series of, or overlapping number of, or concurrent unpunctuated crises in a believer's life.
- 25) The heart can be burdened by the implied assumption that no help is coming. That assumption can overtake expectation.
- 26) The passage of time, and the pressing of needs, can place limits on expectations.

27) If a deadline passes, expectations become burdensome and/or evaporate.

28) Thus, non-punctuated time is the arena of faith.

29) Time, need, and expectations become well-integrated.

30) Time and need place limits on expectations.

(continued in Part Two)