

GOD'S CHRISTMAS GRACE TO FAMILIES: FOUR GRANDMOTHERS OF JESUS
"Grandmother Ruth: Living God's Faithful Grace To Future Families"
(The Book Of Ruth)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

What is so sad **about this event is its effect on another toddler in Union, South Carolina. Newsweek reports that one little boy has since asked his mother if she will kill him, too!**

If this can happen in a Bible belt state, what is the next generation of children in South Carolina, or in New York City or New Hartford, Connecticut for that matter going to have for a family life?

(2) Chuck Colson spoke at the inauguration of Chuck Swindoll as Dallas Seminary's new seminary President. In his speech, Colson revealed that there is an age group coming along now that has no conscience. The police nationwide are very concerned about what is going to happen when they become adults. Insider trading scandals that rocked Wall Street in the 80s with yuppiedom traders will be a picnic compared to what is coming in ten years according to Colson!

If this is so, what will family life be in ten years for our children?

Brother, and the entire extended family is in turmoil over it! Besides, **all parties claim to be born again Christians who love and serve Jesus Christ!**

Will there be a generation with a **Christian** family structure as we now know it in even the **near** future?!

(We turn to the "Need" section of the message . . .)

Need: "If we consider the personal abuse and moral lifestyle decay that exists in today's secular family units, let alone what goes on in nominally CHRISTIAN families, it makes me wonder if FUTURE generations will even EXIST in families! Is there any hope this Christmas for families of the future? What can I do to help?!"

- I. **If ever Messiah's lineage could have come undone at the local family level, it would have been during the apostasy of the Judges!**
 - A. God's plan to save the world from sin's failure included sending His Son, Jesus Christ, through Mary via the line of David, Lk. 1:30-33.
 - B. However, David's line almost unraveled in the days of the Judges:
 1. The period of Israel's judges was marked by a vacuum of centralized spiritual leadership so that everyone did that which was right in his **own** estimation, Judges 21:25.
 2. Because of this problem, terrible family abuse abounded:
 - a. An adulterous wife of a priest was ravaged all night by a band of men near Bethlehem, leading to her death and war, Ju. 19-21.
 - b. To correct the war's slaughter of Benjamites that threatened the annihilation of the tribe, non-Benjamite fathers let their own eligible daughters be kidnapped for marriage by the same hoard that had abused the priest's wife! (Ju. 21:17ff)
 3. To top it off, the line of David was caught in the thick of this social mutilation, and it threatened to destroy the Messianic lineage!
 - a. The man leading Messiah's line **faithlessly** left Israel in the days of the Judges to live in Moab, Ru. 1:1f & B.K.C., O.T., p. 419.
 - b. When he died there, his sons took wives of Moabite women, Ru. 1:3. Besides violating the Law (Dt. 7:2-4), these marriages were an unwise choice in partners as Moabites were renowned for immorality (cf. Gen. 19:30-38 with Moabite origins & Num. 25:1-18 with Moab's moral desecration effort against Israel)!
 - c. The man's sons then died, leaving the line without Hebrew seed, survived by two widows of questionable **Moabite** origin, 1:5!
 - d. When one of the Moabite widows named Ruth returned to Judah with Naomi, her Hebrew mother-in-law, she gleaned for grain as a livelihood in Bethlehem's open fields, 1:22, 2:2-3a.
 - e. Thus, the lineage of Messiah stood void of Hebrew seed in the survivorship of a Moabite widow of unreliable Moabite heritage! Messiah's line also lay threatened from lineage corruption: perverted Benjamite bands of men had access to the Moabite widow (and by her nationality she

was eyed as "easy, fair game") while she gleaned in the open fields of Bethlehem in the evil days of the Judges, Ru. 1:1, 22; 2:2-3a with Ju. 19-21!

- II. **However, God was faithful to His plan about the coming of Messiah, so He preserved Ruth to fit that plan!**
- A. God had promised to bring Messiah through Judah's line, Gn. 49:10.
 - B. Perhaps **just** for this event, God had **already** directed Moses 400 years before to command that a kinsman of a deceased, childless Hebrew man marry his widow to carry on the family name, Dt. 25:5f.
 - C. In divine providence, an upright kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, could fulfill this law and keep Messiah's line going, Ruth 2:1.
 - D. Also, Ruth converted to Israel's God, Ru. 1:16ff!
 - E. As she went to glean under grave circumstances to her welfare, in the providence of God, Ruth came unto Boaz's field, Ru. 2:3b!
 - F. Boaz worked to protect and to provide for Ruth out of respect for her commitment to her mother-in-law, Naomi, Ru. 2:8-13,14-17.
 - G. When Naomi perceived that God worked in these events to unite Ruth with Boaz, she praised God for being faithful both to her older generation **and** to Ruth's younger one! (2:18ff).
 - H. Thus, Naomi applied Scripture, urging Ruth to ask Boaz to become their kinsman-redeemer in saving their family lineage, Ru. 3.
 - I. Boaz and Ruth accordingly married, producing Obed, the father of David, the king of Israel, Ruth 4:10-12, 13, 17-21-22!
 - J. God's Messianic line thus stayed intact for Christ, Mtt. 1:5b, 16f!

Application: *If we worry that past or present family decay will ruin future units, as did Ruth and Boaz, (1) believe on Israel's God Whom we know to be Christ to be plugged into God's eternal plan, Ru. 1:16; Jn. 1:11f; Rom. 8:29f. (2) Then, when we face decay in family life, (a) rely on Rom. 8:28 and Mtt. 28:20b for hope that all things will yet work out for goo! (Ru. 2:20; Gen. 49:10) (b) Also, ((a)) notice God's work in events toward the new generation, praising Him for His ageless loyalty (Ru. 2:20) ((b)) and urge that generation to apply Scripture to enjoy God's blessings in family life (Ru. 3:1-2a with Deut. 25:5-6)!*

Lesson: *God is so faithful to His purposes that no past or present family decay can ruin His work with succeeding generations!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Our family received a Christmas Card from a young woman living in an undisclosed location. The reason her location is hidden from the general public is due to hatred against her from her extended family. Here's the scoop:

- (a) Her father, a homosexual, is deceased, and her mother is a reclusive paranoid schizophrenic who turned on this young woman in a courtroom, charging her with malicious financial harm unjustly due to the mother's mental condition.
- (b) Unfortunately, the extended family believed the mother's testimony, and has threatened to confiscate the daughter's inheritance of the mother's property.
- (c) To survive, the young woman, a believer in Christ through the past ministry of Nepaug Church, followed the direction of her Christian lawyer and moved to a secret location. She has remained mentally healthy by clinging to Psalm 27:10 which reads: **"Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me."**
- (d) She still loves her mother deeply. She has even privately crept back to our area to catch a glimpse of her disheveled mother by looking through an apartment window at her! This effort has proved to be emotionally devastating, for she realizes that an unjust legal restraining order imposed by the other family members and her mother's own fragile mental condition makes it impossible ever again for her to meet her mother in person!
- (e) A missionary and I have worked with this woman for ten years, and now she is ready to attend Bible College to prepare for a counseling ministry to troubled families! She and I both feel that she will be adequately able to empathize with hurting family units and have a tremendous ministry to her generation!
- (f) The point is this: **the next generation is able to find blessing in spite of simply horrific disadvantages of past family decay and spiritual destitution. It finds it the same way the past and our present generation does -- by faith in Christ for salvation and by applying God's Word for victorious living!**