

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part VIII: Judges & Ruth - Facing Group Apostasy As Individuals"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) When I picked up our Church mail Tuesday while preparing to study for this message, I opened a form letter by a world renowned Evangelical leader. He was concerned about the "the moral and spiritual crisis in America."

He wrote: "twelve-year old children carry guns and commit wanton murder in our schools and inner cities; vast numbers of couples abandon their marriage promises; teenagers are ending their lives in a futile search for significance; the young and old alike fruitlessly search for peace and meaning through drugs and alcohol; and we are reaping a host of incurable diseases from our rampant sexual promiscuity . . . like a physically powerful athlete dying of an incurable cancer . . . "

"Hundreds of billions of dollars and millions of hours of endless discussions have already been expended in such efforts, but to no avail. These thorny issues are not simply social, political, or economic dilemmas which can be met with political solutions. If that were true, they would have been solved long ago."

(2) Another form letter arrived this week from a nationally known Evangelical leader, and it took church leaders to task for not making a more public outcry against the wickedness promoted at the Beijing conference on women last month. He wrote: "Being an evangelical, it is deeply disturbing . . . to me that . . . (our) leaders largely ignored one of history's most blatant challenges to their faith -- and the world went on without them . . . The fear of becoming 'political' or tarnishing our image has nullified our influence and made us largely irrelevant to the march of human events . . . I have supported the Christian church emphatically through the years . . . (Our organization) devotes itself . . . to care and (show) concern for pastors and their families. We believe in the work of the church and shudder to think what would happen if it is weakened. But we must constructively criticize the institutional church when it ignores or tolerates blatant evil in the culture. And . . . that has happened in reference to the Beijing conference."

Well, should we **withdraw or attack group apostasy head on by voicing a public complaint at Beijing, or what? HOW can we make a difference, a REAL difference that God will honor?!**

(We now turn to the "Need" section of the sermon . . .)

Need: "With evil ever growing and ever rotting national and world societies, what can I personally ever hope to do to STAY upright or TURN the tide?! Should I flee or attack apostasy, and HOW?!"

- I. **The book of Judges records a setback in God's rule on earth where Israel, God's agent for checking Nimrodian error, ITSELF spiraled down into societal decay through Nimrod's apostasy!**
 - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His earthly deputy, sin deposed him so Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy to oppose God's rule that we know as witchcraft, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rv. 17:5-6.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to stop this evil, Gn. 12:1-3.
 - E. After many challenges to the contrary, that nation, Israel entered the divinely Promised Land **but failed** to conquer it **all** due to **unbelief, compromise and growing idolatry within** it, Gen. 12:4 - Joshua.
 - F. Judges thus records Israel's spiritual decline into societal decay as the unconquered Canaanites seduced her into ancient Nimrodian apostasy!
 1. The Canaanites practiced Baalism, Z.P.E.B., One, p. 432-433.
 2. Baal worship was rooted in Nimrod's Genesis 10-11 apostasy:
 - a. Semiramus who married Nimrod, committed adultery and claimed she conceived her son, Tamuz, miraculously. She started a lewd cult with this lie, being called the "Queen of Heaven," The Two Babylons, Alex. Hislop (Loiz. Bros.), 1959.
 - b. Fueled by lustful rites, this mother-child cult motif spread into Egypt, Persia, Rome and Greece and entered Canaan appearing as Baalism, Shaw & McKenney, The Deadly Deception, p. 159.
 3. When Israel failed to drive out all of the Canaanites, she began to worship Baal, and the Angel of the Lord condemned Israel to be persecuted by the Canaanites in resulting judgment, Judges 1-2:10a.
 4. Judges 2:6-16:31 shows a downward spiral of Israel's culture into Canaanite apostasy's decay: (a) sin (b) pursued by servitude to Gentiles (c) resulting in crying for God's help (d) with His gracious deliverance through a judge (e) trailed by worse bouts of sin left Israel sinking ever deeper into decay, B.K.C., O.T., p. 383! Even the last **judge**, Samson was **himself** barely able to help Israel's cause as his **own** immorality with Canaanite, Delilah hindered him!
 5. Indeed, Israel became as rotten as was evil Sodom, Ju. 17-21:
 6. **Moses' grandson** led a **false cult** for the tribe of Dan, Ju. 17-18!

7. In Gibeah of Benjamin, a mistress of nearby Bethlehem was abused to death by bisexuals who had desired her Levite mate. War broke out where the 11 tribes killed all but 600 Benjamite men. Feeling sorry, the tribes let them kidnap their own virgins for **wives**, 19-21!
- G. Eventually, Israel had no wholesome substructure to yield godliness, for "every man did that which was right in his **own eyes**," Ju. 21:25!
- II. **At the site of Israel's worst societal dysfunction, God's "thread of redemption" worked to save society through personal godliness!**
- A. The book of Ruth is set **during** the era of the Judges in the **area** of **Bethlehem** near where the concubine **atrocities** occurred, Ru. 1:1-22!
- B. But **opposite** this **tragedy**, the book of Ruth proves God's blessing on **personal godliness** that **counters** societal decay **WHERE** it **EXISTS**:
1. Ruth, a needy, widowed Moabite from a nation formed by incest (Gn. 19:36-37) accepted Israel's God as her **own** Lord, 1:15-18.
 2. She carried this commitment over into excelling in personal human relationships: Ruth was devoted to her needy mother-in-law, Naomi (Ruth 1:16-19) and upright in her commitment to Boaz, Ru. 3:9-10.
 3. Then she used Scripture for help: by way of Lv. 23:22, as a Gentile, Ruth chose to make a living by gleaning grain at harvest, Ruth 2:2.
 4. God rewarded her by making Ruth's life count for **world** societal renewal: (a) With Bethlehem's fields being **dangerous** for women, **God led** Ruth to glean under protective **Boaz**, 2:13! (b) Through her gracious **testimony** and **God's** Dt. 25:5-6 provision, Boaz was influenced to marry her for her welfare, 2:4-4:13! (c) Through this **godly marriage seedbed** came David 3 generations later to lead Israel out of apostasy (4:13-22). (d) Through **David** came **Christ** Who will rule the **world in righteousness**, Lu. 1:31-33; Mtt. 1:21!
- C. So **where** Israel's societal decay peaked as villains under Nimrodian cultism abused a Bethlehem mistress to death, **there GOD** rewarded godliness in Ruth, a Moabite of incestuous national origin to influence others and marry to form a **godly seedbed** for world societal renewal!

Application: To effect world societal renewal, (1) believe on Christ as personal Savior, Jn. 3:16. (2) Then, (a) confess our sins to Him (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) rely on the Spirit for behavior control (Ga. 5:16-23) to (c) obey Scripture, 1 Jn. 2:3-6! (3) Next, (a) resist trying to affect societal change by direct actions toward the apostate group, but rather (b) live out godliness in our personal relationships with God and man so that (c) God can use us for group renewal! (Pr. 28:4)

Lesson: Though one cannot stop a group's apostasy **DIRECTLY, IN TIME, GOD uses INDIVIDUAL GODLINESS to CREATE its renewal!**

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In 1725, a woman living in London, England gave birth to a son named John. She was a devout member of a group called the Dissenters that had taken a powerless stand against the spiritual deadness in the Anglican Church of her day. She was married to a sea captain who spent most of his time away, and she was left with the responsibility of rearing her son, John, without a father and in the midst of spiritual deadness in the church of her era.

In the seven years of life that remained in her, as she died in 1732, this mother taught John to pray and filled his mind with Scriptures. She died, not knowing what would become of John.

Her son was taken in by distant relatives who mocked his belief in his mother's God, discouraged him from praying and left him feeling lonely and unhappy. John thus ran away to sea. (Ideals Hymns of Faith and Inspiration, p. 80).

The Rebirth of America , The Arther S. DeMoss Foundation, p. 178).

Finally, under a dire sea emergency in which he almost lost his life, John Newton made a commitment of faith to his mother's God. He wrote the hymn, "Amazing Grace" and was later used by God to influence member of Parliament, William Wilburforce to legislate against slavery. England thus avoided the civil war over slavery that rocked the American nation.

So a mother, living in a dark era in England's spiritual history, without the help of a spiritual husband at hand, a woman who had only 7 years of exposure to her son to influence him for Christ left an impact on him that God used to lead England to avoid civil war and end its vile slave trade!

And that is how spiritual renewal is born! Ruth the Moabite and Mrs. Newton have shown us how -- via grass roots godliness!!