



GOD'S HIDDEN WINGS

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Daniel Block, *Judges & Ruth*, 1999.

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 1, Chapter 17.

Sinclair Ferguson, *Faithful God: An Exposition of Ruth*, 2005.

Carolyn Custis James, *The Gospel of Ruth: Loving God Enough to Break the Rules*, 2008.

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 5.

Head: Understanding the Bible

1) Read Ruth 2. How did Ruth end up in Boaz' field on the same day that Boaz came from Bethlehem? What specific phrase is used? What is the narrator trying to get us to think about?

2) What metaphor does Boaz use to describe Ruth's conversion and move to Israel? Read Psalm 17:8; 36:7-8; 63:7-8; Psalm 91:1-4. What are the benefits and results of living in this metaphor?

3) The theological term for the metaphor in question #2 is providence. Providence is the way that God sustains, nourishes and cares for everything he has made (John Calvin). Everything that happens is according to the unchangeable counsel of His own will according to his perfect and infallible foreknowledge. Those are big words to say that everything that happens to us comes from God's hand. Can you think of Scripture verses that teach this?

4) What's the difference between providence and fate? What's the difference between providence and chance? Is there any detail of your life that has escaped God's care and attention?

“The Scriptures deal with the providence of God in a consoling way. Plenty of riddles remain, both in the life of individuals and in the history of the world, but God lets the light of His Word shine over all these mysteries, not to solve them but so that we might have hope. The doctrine of providence is not a philosophical system, but a confession of faith, that God and God alone, by his almighty and everywhere present power, preserves and governs all things. Don't limit God's hand and His will to only a few big moments in your life!

~Paraphrase of Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*

Heart: Using the Gospel on Our Affections

“Knowledge of God’s providence ought to make us grateful for when life is going well, help us be patient in adversity and give an incredible freedom about the future. Whenever anything good happens, we should give thanks to God and be comforted because it is the Lord who moves others to be kind to us.”

John Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 1, Chapter 17, Paragraph 7.

- 5) What is your initial response to the teaching that we live under the shadow of His wings, being guided by his providential hand? Angry? Comforted? Afraid?

- 6) Jesus uses the same metaphor in Luke 13:31-34. What is every man’s natural response to God’s care and protection under his wings? What does Jesus want to protect us from?

- 7) Read Acts 2:23. How does Peter use God’s providence to describe Jesus’ death? Are sinners let off the hook? How does the cross show us the extent and the beauty of God’s providence (living under God’s hidden wings)?

Hands: Applying the Gospel to Our Lives

“God directs everything for the praise of the glory of His wisdom , power, justice, goodness and mercy.”

~Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 5, Paragraph 1.

- 8) Where do you run for refuge when life gets hard? Do you trust God’s Hidden Wings? Or something else?

- 9) Do you live your life outside of God’s reach, outside of the shadow of God’s wings? How can you see God’s providence working in your life today? Who are the instruments of God’s kindness towards you.

- 10) How can you use God’s providence to increase your gratitude and calm your anxieties about the future? Take time to praise and pray through these things.