

How are you preparing for the elections in November? If you're like me, you are probably doing a lot of praying. God be merciful to the United States of America. Please give us a leader who will elect conservative Supreme Court justices who will preserve our constitution and our religious liberties. Give us a leader who will keep our country safe from growing civil unrest. But if you are a wealthy liberal person living in California, you aren't praying. Rather you may be having a bunker built for your family. No kidding. Underground bunker construction business is booming in 2016 with "[Rising S Bunkers](#)" of Texas telling the [Hollywood Reporter](#) that their sales are up 700% year to date.

Rising S Bunkers installed a 37-room, 9,000-square-foot complex in Napa Valley for an Academy Award-winning client that rang in at \$10.28 million, with a bowling alley, sauna, jacuzzi, shooting range and an ultra-large home theater. This year, on another Napa Valley property, the company constructed a \$9 million, 7,600-square-foot compound with horse stables and accommodations for 12, along with four escape tunnels leading to outlets on the estate, multiple hidden rooms — in case "you let someone in whom you do not fully trust," says Lynch — and an aboveground safe house "disguised as a horse barn."

A nuclear attack on the Villages by North Korea or Iran is possibly someday conceivable, but right now doesn't seem very likely. So it probably doesn't matter if you know where the nearest bunker is to take refuge. There is a much more serious threat that we live under. It's the reality of daily attacks from Satan and the pain of living in a sin-filled world. Is there anywhere we can take refuge from these hardships? There is. The Old Testament believer Ruth sought refuge under the wings of Israel's God ([Ruth 2:12](#)). Therefore, if you want better protection than a 10 million dollar bunker in your back yard. "Take Refuge Under the Lord's Wings!"

The true story of Ruth is one of the most loved in the Bible. It took place about 3,100 years ago during the time of the Judges. Initially the story isn't even about Ruth. It's about a man named Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons. They fled Israel because of a famine and went to live in the land of Moab. There, Elimelech's two sons married Moabite women. But then Elimelech died and not long after that his two sons also passed away leaving three widows: Naomi and her two daughters-in-law. Naomi was so distraught by the deaths that she insisted that people no longer call her Naomi which means "pleasant" but Mara or "bitter" because that's how she felt towards the Lord. There's at least one thing for us to learn here. Things don't always go as planned, not even for God's people. Elimelech thought he could save himself and his family by moving to Moab but he ended up dying there. What we learn is that we really are not the masters of our domain, God is. So you may have some definite plans for what you want to do this winter or next year, but we must acknowledge what is written in the book of Proverbs: "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps" ([Proverbs 16:9](#)). Keep making plans but always humbly add: "If the Lord wills."

So does this mean that you are promising to follow a God who will do with you whatever he feels like? No. God is not a dictator who orders his servants to do what suits his fancy without any regard to their well-being. This King has promised to guide your steps for your good. That too is illustrated in the story of Ruth. The trip to Moab may have seemed to end poorly for Elimelech and his sons but it was good for Ruth. Ruth was a Moabite. Her people did not follow the true God. But when Ruth married into

Elimelech's family she came to believe in the one true God. She came to possess salvation. And so God will direct our steps, so that everything that happens to you will somehow work out for your eternal good. In fact Elimelech's death wasn't even evil. Death is really just God's green light for believers to cross into heaven.

Elimelech and family must have taught Ruth this truth and she believed it. My how she believed it! Her faith is obvious in what has become the most famous words Ruth spoke. When Naomi decided to go back to Israel after the death of her husband and sons, she insisted that her daughters-in-law stay with their own people. One daughter-in-law, Orpah, went back but this is the exchange that followed between Naomi and Ruth: "15 "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." 16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" ([Ruth 1:15, 16](#)).

Do you see how serious Ruth was about her faith? She was willing to turn her back on her own family to follow the God of Israel. She was willing to do this because she sensed that staying in Moab surrounded by unbelievers would not have been good for her faith and therefore not good for her hold on eternal life.

In the same way, we would want to turn our backs on anything including a job or even our family should they get in the way of our following Jesus? That's a serious commitment. But it's well worth it. No, it's not worth it in the sense that the Lord will make you rich because you follow him. Or give you perfect health. Ruth certainly didn't become an instant millionaire because she followed Naomi to Bethlehem. Life there was difficult for Ruth. She was poor, so poor she had to go out into the fields and pick up leftover grain for something to eat. But even so the God of the Bible under whose wings Ruth and Naomi took refuge provided for them. In fact, do you think it was an accident that Ruth gathered grain in a field owned by a wealthy believer named Boaz? Of course not. God had guided Ruth's steps to that field so that He could care for Ruth and her mother-in-law through his faithful servant Boaz.

Ruth ended up marrying Boaz and they had a son named Obed. This Obed was King David's grandfather. And David, in turn, was an ancestor of the promised Messiah, Jesus. It's comforting isn't it that God included Ruth, a former unbeliever and non-Jew, in the family tree of the Savior? It illustrates how God does indeed love all people and wants everyone to be saved, including you and me.

The steadfast faith God had worked in the heart of Ruth wasn't only good for her, it was good for her mother-in-law Naomi too. Remember how Naomi thought that her name should be changed to Mara because she was bitter at what God had allowed her to go through? Well Ruth's love saw Naomi through the loss of her husband and sons. This love was so obvious that when Obed was born the local women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth" ([Ruth 4:14, 15](#)). Ruth's love for Naomi is not unlike God's love for us. Even when we feel that God has slighted us and dealt us a bad hand, he doesn't take his love from us. He continues to sustain us and hold us through tough times even when we are guilty of Naomi-like grumblings. What a gracious and patient God we have! Don't leave the refuge under his wings.

The best evidence of God's love for you and me, of course, is the sending of his Son, Jesus. Baby Obed was like Jesus in a way. The local women even called him Naomi's "kinsman-redeemer." Because Naomi had no sons and no chances of marrying again to have more children, her family name and her family lands were in danger of being lost. But when Obed was born to Ruth, Naomi's daughter-in-law, that boy became an heir to Elimelech. Obed's arrival "redeemed" Elimelech's family name from annihilation. When God sent his son to be born of the Virgin Mary it was so that we would have a kinsman, a brother who would rescue us. By his perfect life Jesus earned eternal life and then passed that prize on to us when he gave his life on the cross to pay for our sins. What Jesus did would be a bit like if a friend bought you an all expense paid trip to a Caribbean resort with their own money, and then stayed home to serve drunk driving charges in your place that were charged to you.

Friend, even when you are completely unaware of what is happening, or even why something is happening, God is guiding your decisions and actions. He is working everything together for your good and His ultimate glory. Our responsibility is to surrender to His sovereignty. . It's been said, "Tough times never last, tough people do." The Bible says, "Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." (Ps 30:5) Tragedy strikes when we least expect it. Some trip over suffering while others triumph over it. They become better, not bitter; they live triumphant and not troubled lives; and they recover faster than others, while many do not at all. My friends. God is still in control, even if you have trouble seeing it right now.

The only survivor of a shipwreck washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He cried out to God to save him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but he only got depressed. He eventually was able to build a small hut and put his only possessions in it. But one day, after hunting for some food, he came back to his hut to find that it had gone up in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. He was devastated. Early the next day a ship drew near the island and rescued him. He couldn't believe it. When he came on board he said to the crew, "How did you know I was here?" To which they replied, "We saw your smoke signal."

You may never have to take refuge in a concrete, lead-lined bunker. But that's just fine. A bunker can't protect you against a nuclear judgment day. But Jesus can. Take refuge under the wings of the Lord. It's only here that we find protection from the eternal judgment we deserve for our sins and it's here that we can be certain that every detail of our life is being guided in the interest of our salvation. May we all cling to the Lord with the intensity and sincerity of Ruth. Looking for bunker type security. Take Refuge Under the Lord's Wings! Amen.