



4. The Conquest.

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Joshua, Judges, Ruth. Preparation, invasion, conquest, tribal inheritances, the Judges Cycle, the nations nearby.

Study questions:

- Define *theocracy*.
- What is the doctrinal purpose of Joshua?
- How important is the conquest of land to Israel's identity?
- How did the judges shape Israel's history? In what ways do they prefigure Christ?
- What is "the Judges Cycle"?
- How does Ruth pave the way for Jesus' coming?

Memory:

Joshua 1:8-9, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Judges 21:25, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit."

We now enter material which the Hebrew Bible classifies under the category of the *Nebi-iem*, specifically the former prophets of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

Joshua-Judges. The Beginnings of the Conquest and Settlement.

Joshua. The Beginning of the Historical Books.

1. Title:

Joshua is named for the conquering leader who was given the name יהושע *yəhōšua*, meaning "Yahweh saves or delivers" in Num 13:16. Before this his name was יהושׁע, *hošēa*, meaning "salvation," or "deliverance". Joshua's new name

indicated that Yahweh was the source of deliverance and salvation, which is a major theme in the book of Joshua.

2. Author.

Written by Joshua? Written by Samuel? We don't know because the book doesn't say. Traditionally, Joshua is identified as the author of the book. Although, the book never mentions that Joshua is the author. Therefore, the book could have been written by an anonymous author or author at any point after the conquest of Canaan. Much ink has been spilled as to the possible author or authors of the book.

3. Date.

Joshua and conquest occurred around 1400 BC (1406 to be precise) or 1220 BC (La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush say 1250). When you just follow the biblical record, then 1400 BC makes the most sense. However, when you follow the archaeological record, sometime around 1200 makes the most sense. Therefore, you have to make a choice here.

4. Major Themes:

Purpose. The book demonstrates the fulfillment of the promise to the fathers in regards to the gift of the land (Deut. 30:20).

Theological themes:

1. Be strong and courageous. Be strong and very courageous.

Joshua 1:6-9. ⁶“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

2. Theologically, Joshua demonstrates that if you follow God, then he will give you victory. Judges demonstrates that if you don't follow God, then he will discipline you.

Joshua and the Promised Land

The record of the Hebrew people crossing the Jordan River to claim the Promised Land is recorded in the books of Joshua and Judges. Joshua gives the picture of a great army of God marching into the land, claiming victories in battle after battle. Judges pictures small tribal confederations attempting to oust local rulers from the lands they tenaciously hold. Both pictures are accurate. In fact,

Moses said it would happen like this in Deuteronomy 7:22, “The Lord your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little. You will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once, or the wild animals will multiply around you.”

The Hebrews did march into Canaan and claim vast sections of the land. They also had to continue to fight smaller skirmishes to control the land.

5. Genre/Literary Style.

Narrative.

6. Outline/Structure:

Outline:

Joshua has a bifid (divided) structure.

Chapters 1-12. The Conquest of Canaan. This is exciting material.

Chapters 13-21. Chapters of the land being divided and given boundary distinction. This is not so exciting. However, even though these chapters aren't so exciting to us, they were precious to ancient Israel. They were getting the land they had been promised.

Chapters 1-12. Introduction. Joshua as leader.

Childs writes, “However, the figure of Joshua, especially in the first eleven chapters, is often consciously set in a typological relation to Moses. He commands the people to sanctify themselves before the great event (3.5//Ex. 19:10; he instructs the priest (4.10); he is exalted before the people like Moses (4.14; he encounters the commander of God's army (5.13//Ex. 3.1ff.); he intercedes for sinful Israel (7.7ff.//Dut. 9.25); he gives his last will just before his death (23.1//31.2ff).”¹

Chapters 1-8 give the central land campaign. Three cities: Jericho, Ai, and Shechem. God gives victory over Jericho without any human help. God does not give victory at all. Then humans fight with God at Shechem and God gives victory.

Chapters 9-10: Southern campaign. Many cities mentioned.

Chapter 11: Northern campaign. Covered in one chapter.

Chapter 12: Summary.

Chapters 13-21. Distribution of the land and refuge cities. The promise of God in regards to the land is fulfilled.

¹ Brevard Childs, *The Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, p. 245.

Chapters 13-21. Allotment description. You see there are large parcels of land that were not conquered.

Chapter 20. Towns for accidental killers. God commonly goes against the local culture. Culture believed there was an obligation for vengeance when someone was killed. Even if it was an accident. You spill blood; we will spill your blood. This still exists today. Look at the invasion of Gaza in 2014 by Israel. Three Jewish boys were kidnapped and murdered. Therefore, Jewish extremists kidnap and kill an Arab boy. Arabs lob rockets from Gaza into Israel. Israel responds by bombing Gaza.

However, with accidental death, God picked cities that were overseen by the priests that would receive those who killed someone accidentally and allowed them to reestablish themselves safely in a new city.

Chapters 22-24. Conclusion. Revival movement and Joshua's sermon. Covenant renewal.

7. Teaching/Commentary:

A. Joshua 7. Ai means "ruins." Compared to the fortified city of Jericho, it should have been easily conquered. Joshua culls back his army before attacking Ai, demonstrating that he wasn't worried about taking that city. But the Israelites are defeated at Ai. Why? Sin. The sin of one man.

But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel.

² Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

³ When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there." ⁴ So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, ⁵ who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

What is the punishment of Achan? They destroy his whole family. Why? The concept of corporate personality. If one sins, the whole community is guilty of sin.

²⁴ Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today."

Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. ²⁶ Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.

B. Each generation must renew the covenant. You have to make the covenant your own. Look at the covenant renewal in Joshua 24.

Starts with Joshua in verses 14-15:

Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Each family is called out to follow God. This will be demonstrated in them throwing out other gods besides Yahweh.

People answer,

¹⁶ Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! ¹⁷ It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. ¹⁸ And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God.

Joshua challenges them:

¹⁹ Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you."

²¹ But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the Lord."

²² Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord."

"Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.

²³ "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel."

²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey him."

²⁵ On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he drew up for them decrees and laws. ²⁶ And Joshua recorded these things

in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the Lord.

²⁷“See!” he said to all the people. “This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the Lord has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.”

The former slaves move into a land that had been promised to them through Abraham. They move across the land in twelve divisions (tribes) as one army.

8. NT Associations:



9. Commentaries:

Butler, Trent. *Joshua*. Word Biblical Commentary. Word, 1983.

Woudstra, Marten. *New International Commentary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.

Hess, Richard. *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*. InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Howard, David. *New American Commentary*. Broadman & Holman, 1998.

Younger, Lawson. *Ancient Conquest Accounts*. Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.

Judges

1. Title:

From the Hebrew, שׁוֹפְטִים (šôphəṭîm) which means “judges.” However, the book does not refer to any of the leaders in the book as a judge (שׁוֹפֵט, šôphēt). Jephthah does refer to Yahweh as the judge (הַשֹּׁפֵט, haššôphēt; 11:27). The judges were local leaders who were selected by God to deliver his people from their enemies.

The book of Judges received its title because the contents of the book center on a group of leaders who serve as judges (leaders) of the people. The book records the history of the rather dark days between Joshua and the rise of the monarchy in Israel.

2. Author: Unknown. Perhaps Samuel.

3. Date: Either 1400–1050 B.C. or 1220–1050 B.C. The time of the conquest of Canaan to the rise of Samuel as judge/prophet.

4. General Themes:

(1) The Judges Cycle (also called the Deuteronomic cycle).

The story of the book of Judges follows an historical cycle. First, the people commit apostasy and leave the Lord, forgetting his laws. Then the people are oppressed by a foreign power. After a time of oppression, the people cry to God for deliverance. God hears their cry and sends a deliverer in the form of a judge of Israel. Then the cycle begins to repeat itself by the people leaving God and committing apostasy. The book is a microcosm of the hills and valleys of our own spiritual journey. How often do we forget the great things that God has done for us? We slip into times of apathy or even apostasy. The challenge is to break the Judges’ cycle and stay on the mountaintop spiritually.

(2) The book ends on a low note: Judges 21:25 states, “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”

(3) Gleason Archer, an OT scholar, says, “The basic theme of the book is Israel’s failure as a theocracy to keep true to the covenant even under the leadership of men chosen of God to deliver them from oppression.”

5. Genre:

Narrative

6. Outline/Structure:

Outline:

(1) Judges 1:1-3:5. Introduction. Otto Eisefeldt said this was the oldest traditional material of the Canaanite conquest.

(2) Judges 2:6-16:31, main stories.

- A. Othniel—3:7-11
- B. Ehud—3:12-30
- C. Shamgar—3:31
- D. Deborah and Barak—4:1-5:31
- E. Gideon—6:1-8:35
- F. Abimelech rules Shechem—9:1-57
- G. Tola—10:1-2
- H. Jair—10:3-5
- I. Jephthah—10:6-12:7
- J. Ibzan—12:8-10
- K. Elon—12:11-12
- L. Abdon—12:13-15
- M. Samson—13:1-16:31

(3) Judges 17-21, two appendices.

- A. Judges 17-18. A search for territory for the tribe of Dan
- B. 19-20:21, Levites concubine; punishment of Benjamin.

(4) Conclusion Summary. 21:25

The Judges

Passage Name Oppressor Length

Judges 3:7-11 Othniel Mesopotamia under Cushan-rishathaim 40 years

Judges 3:12-30 Ehud Moabites under Eglon 80 years

Judges 3:31 Shamgar Philistines **TIME?**

Judges 4:1-5:31 Deborah (and Barak) King Jabin of the Canaanites 40 years

Judges 6:1-8:32 Gideon Midianites 40 years

Judges 8:33-9:57 Abimelech Midianites 3 years

Judges 10:1-2 Tola Midianites 23 years

Judges 10:3-5 Jair Midianites 22 years

Judges 10:6-12:7 Jephthah Philistines and Ammonites 6 years

Judges 12:8-10 Ibzan Philistines and Ammonites 7 years

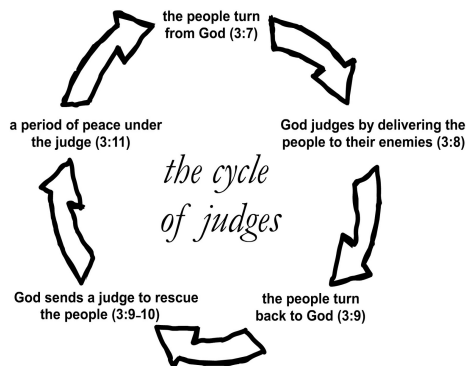
Judges 12:11-12 Elon Philistines and Ammonites 10 years

Judges 12:13-15 Abdon Philistines and Ammonites 8 years

Judges 13:1-16:31 Samson Philistines 20 years

7. Teaching/Commentary:

(A). **The Judges Cycle.** Judges 3. Based on blessing and cursing.



(1) vs. 7. Disobedience of Israel.

(2) vs. 8. Judgment or Cursing.

(3) vs. 9. Repent and Cry Out

(4) vs. 10. Deliverance or Salvation

Judges 3:7-12, ⁷ The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord; they forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs. ⁸ The anger of the Lord burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years. ⁹ But when they cried out to the Lord, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. ¹⁰ The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The Lord gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. ¹¹ So the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

¹² Once again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and because they did this evil the Lord gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. ²

(B). Different types of judges. Various judges = Various leadership styles.

(1) Hero of the moment. A need arises, an enemy comes, and a judge is called to confront the problem. These judges are seen in one instance and never seen again.

(a) Othniel. Jud. 3:7-11. Fought Mesopotamia.

(b) Ehud. Jud. 3:12-20. Fought Moab.

(c) Shamgar. Jud. 3:31. Fought Philistines.

(2) Leaders for a Period of Time.

(a) Tola – 23 years. Jud. 10:1-2

(b) Jair – 22 Years. Jud. 10:305 (30 sons ruled 30 years)

(c) Ibzan- 7 years. Jud. 12:8-10. (30 sons and 30 daughters married outside clan)

(d) Elon – 10 years. Jud. 12:11-12

(e) Abdon – 8 years. Jud. 12:13-15.

(3) A combination of 1 & 2. Heroes of the Moment who led for a period of time.

(a) Deborah – Jud. 4-5. “40 years.” Tis means “a long, long time.” A generation. Defeats Canaanites.

(b) Gideon – Jud. 6-8. 40 Years”. Defeats Midianites.

(c) Jephthah, Jud. 10:6 – 12:7. 6 years. Defeats Ammonites.

(4) Hero for a long period.

Samson. His judgeship revolves around his love life. Jud. 13-16.
Judge for 20 years.

C. What was the function of a judge?

(1) Law giver. They preserved the law for the covenant community.

² *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), Jdg 3:7-12.

(2) Controversy deciders. Handled disputes. Priest and wise men followed this.

(3) Charismatic leaders. Had the gift of God's presence. Like the prophet.

(4) Military champion. They were believed to be of divine possession. They were to be possessed by God.

The authority of the judge was divine. The root of their authority was the gift of God's spirit. God worked through many different types of people. Some for a short period of time, other's longer.

- Gideon, who protests his call. Yet God uses him.
- Deborah, a woman. That is out of character for the biblical narrative to this point. God was with Deborah and used her in a powerful way.
- Jephthah. Difficult to know what to say about Jephthah. He makes a vow and keeps it. However, it is difficult to understand the story.
- Samson. God used Samson in spite of Samson's glaring faults and weaknesses. Sometimes that happens. Doesn't mean we should pick him as our role model. But God does work in strange ways at times.

8. NT Associations:

Hebrews 11:32-40,

³² And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ They were stoned^f; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— ³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. ⁴⁰ God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

9. Commentaries:

^f Some early manuscripts *stoned; they were put to the test;*

Block, Daniel. *Judges and Ruth*. New American Commentary. Broadman & Holman, 1998.

Boling, Robert. Anchor Bible. Doubleday, 1975.

Cundall, Authur, and Morris, Leon. *Judges and Ruth*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968.

Wood, Leon. *The Distressing Days of the Judges*. Zondervan, 1975; Wipf & Stock, 2000.

Younger, Lawson. The NIV Application Commentary. Zondervan, 2002.

Ruth

1. Title:

The Hebrew רות

and the Greek Ρούθ.

In the Jewish Bible, Ruth follows the book of Proverbs in the *kethubim*, כְּתוּבִים. Perhaps because it is read during the Jewish festival, the feast of weeks or Passover.

In the Septuagint it follows Judges. Historically, it lies between the period of the judges and the united monarch.

2. Author:

Samuel? Tradition says Samuel.

Anonymous author.

3. Date:

If written by Samuel, then c. 1010. David is listed in the genealogy in 4:18-22, but he is not mentioned as king. Therefore, could have been written before he rose to become king.

However, many date this book quite late. Some date it during the time of exile, stating it is an anti-Ezra polemic. Ezra forbid foreign wives. Ruth was a foreign wife who also happened to be the grandmother of King David.

It is unlikely the book was written during the exile. However, we cannot be certain when the book was composed.

4. Major Themes:

1. God is the God of all People.

Ruth was a Moabitess. Yet, she was also the grandmother of King David.

2. Instructs Israel on how to treat foreigners and sojourners in its land

(See (Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:33–34; Deut 10:17–19). Also, you see the law of gleaning, which instructs leaving part of the harvest for the poor. Also, the instruction of levirate marriage and the kinsman redeemer play into this story (See Deut. 25:5-10), as well as laws of property rights. With the levirate marriage, if a man died without a son, then the obligation fell to the next-of-kin (kinsman redeemer) to marry his wife and produce an heir.

3. God's *hesed*. The loving kindness of God. *Hesed* is God's love, mercy, grace. Yahweh extends his *hesed* to Naomi through Ruth. He extends his *hesed* to Ruth through Boaz. Although his name is mentioned only once in the story, (and even then it was mentioned in not the most positive light, 1:6, "Do not call me Naomi ['Pleasant'], call me Mara ['Bitter'], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and Lord has brought me back empty." But God would not leave her empty. His *hesed* is offered to Naomi and Ruth as the story unfolds.

The story of Ruth takes place within the time between Joshua and the rise of the monarchy. Seeming written to explain how a Moabitess could be a part of David's ancestry, it stands as testimony of how God always planned for the nations around Israel to be influenced by God's demonstration of power within the borders of Israel. Even in the Old Testament, God grafted into the vine of Israel some Gentiles, showing his love for all nations. The story also presents a beautiful picture of loyalty and love among people, which stands in stark contrast to the strife and lawlessness reflected in Judges. It also applies the law of Levirate marriage, that of the kinsman-redeemer.

5. Genre/Literary Style.

Historical narrative.

Folktale.

Short story.

6. Outline/Structure:

Four chapters. Each tells a part of the story:

I. Ruth goes to Judah. 1:1–22

II. Ruth sees Boaz. 2:1–23

III. Ruth proposes marriage to Boaz. 3:1–18

IV. Boaz and Ruth marry. 4:1–22

7. Teaching/Commentary:

God is present with his people, even when he doesn't seem to be there. Remember Naomi's comment about her life, "'Do not call me Naomi ['Pleasant'], call me Mara ['Bitter'], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and Lord has brought me back empty (1:6).'" Yet God was present with Naomi. He was present even in his apparent absence.

Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush write:

God works behind the scenes through the ordinary motivations and events of the story. He 'is everywhere—but totally hidden in purely human coincidences and schemes, such as a young girl's accidental steps and an old woman's risky plan.'³ The author stresses thus one particular aspect of God's providence—its hiddenness. He conceals God's guidance in normal human causality simply because he believes it is by nature hidden. ... At times God does intervene directly in the court of human affairs to effect the purposes of redemption. But in the book of Ruth he acts much more subtly—through the everyday events and motivations of ordinary people, the ripples of whose lives stirred little beyond the pool of their own community. Through their faithfulness and God's hidden guidance, this family was preserved for Israel—a matter of no small moment, for from it stemmed great David and, many generations later, great David's greater Son."⁴

8. NT Associations:

Matthew 1:5-6,

"Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,
Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,
Obed the father of Jesse,
⁶and Jesse the father of King David.

God was present with Ruth and Naomi. Although they didn't realize he was present. Like in the Joseph story, God was working. God does that. He does it on a big scale in gigantic miracles stories like the Exodus, but he also does it in the lives of individuals like Ruth and Naomi. Sometimes we can't see God as being present. Sometimes it might seem like he is absent. But even when it seems he is absent, like when Naomi said, "Do not call me Naomi ['Pleasant'], call me Mara ['Bitter'], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me," God was still present in that moment. Sometimes we have to squint our eyes to see God, but he is still there. He is there in the silence. He is there in the stillness. He is there even when it appears he is absent. And for us, miracles of miracles, he came to us in the flesh in Jesus to demonstrate that he is present for us in our lives today. Since God is present, let's

³ Hals, "Book of Ruth," *IDBS*, p. 759.

⁴ LaSor, Hubbard, Bush, pp. 615-616.

live in the present, taking God with us wherever we go so that people can see God/Jesus living in us.

9. Commentaries:

Atkinson, David. *Ruth*. The Bible Speaks Today. InterVarsity, 1983.

Block, Daniel. *Judges and Ruth*. New American Commentary. Broadman & Holman, 1998.

Bush, Frederic. Word Biblical Commentary. Word, 1996.

Campbell, Edward. Anchor Bible. Doubleday, 1975.

Cundall, Authur, and Morris, Leon. *Judges and Ruth*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968.

Hubbard, Robert L., Jr. *The Book of Ruth*. New International Commentary of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.