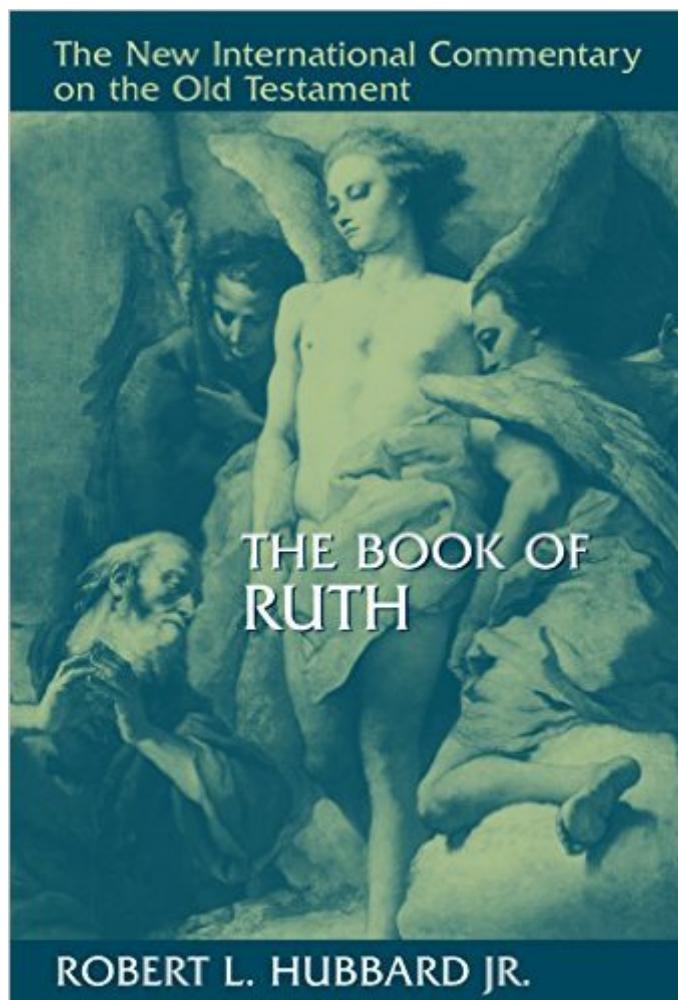


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The Book Of Ruth (New International Commentary On The Old Testament (NICOT))



Synopsis

The book of Ruth contains one of the Bible's best-known and most-loved stories. This major commentary by Robert L. Hubbard Jr. shows how the author of Ruth used, with great literary artistry, the story of Ruth and Naomi to convey important theological themes. In his introduction Hubbard discusses the issues of text, canonicity, literary criticism, authorship, date, purpose, setting, genre, legal background, themes, and theology, concluding with an outline of the book and a thorough bibliography. The commentary proper is based on Hubbard's own fresh translation and accented by copious footnotes on textual, philological, and literary matters. Gleaning the best from recent research on Ruth, Hubbard gives the story's rich literary, grammatical, and theological dimensions a careful, rigorous treatment. He allows for the possibility that the anonymous author was a woman and argues that the narrative itself aims to counter opposition to the Davidic monarchy in Israel and Judah during Solomon's reign. Throughout, Hubbard's sensitivity to the literary genius of Ruth's author and his coherent explication of the outworking of the book's theological themes make this volume an invaluable tool for anyone desiring to explore the intriguing story of Ruth in depth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a thorough but readable study of the book of Ruth. It pays close attention to the details of the text, including issues of language and cultural background, yet it's also strong on theological

matters, which won't be true of many commentaries on Ruth. Hubbard argues that the most likely setting of the book is from the early monarchy during the reign of David or somewhat soon thereafter. His exploration of the obscure practices that may lie behind this book (kinsman-redeemer, Levirate marriage, etc.) are fascinating and thorough, yet he isn't dogmatic on every issue, realizing the difficulties in understanding all the details. Overall, his careful drawing out of the message in this book about God's providence and loving covenant care and the significant effect people will have if they display the same for others is well done.

This is one of the best books I have ever read and as a commentary it is as good as Wenham's Genesis commentary (WBC) and Block's Judges commentary (NAC). Longman says that it is one of the very best of the NICOT series and gives it 5 stars. The introduction is 80 pages long and alone is worth the price of the commentary. In addition to topics such as authorship, date, and canonicity, he covers God's character and God's activity and how it relates to human activity. Concerning this last point, Hubbard says that a key theological assumption of the book of Ruth is the intimate link between human action and divine action. What I particularly enjoyed were the profound insights that are throughout the commentary, on topics such as God's providence, the Hebrew word "hesed" (usually translated "lovingkindness" or "steadfast love"), and (so-called) luck. These insights offer practical applications for our lives. For example, concerning the Hebrew word "hesed" Hubbard says, "Though rare, risky, and restrictive, the practice of loyal, compassionate devotion - in a word, hesed - pleases God so much that one may reasonably expect repayment in kind from him. Such reward is the generous gift of a sovereign lord who graciously chooses to honor human hesed. Only those who do it may receive it." Are you lucky in life? Commenting on Ruth 2:3 where Ruth "happened upon" a field belonging to Boaz, Hubbard writes, "The reader is probably to react smilingly, 'Accident? Of course not!' If so, the writer offered a brief peek at Yahweh's hidden, providential hand behind the accident. He had carefully guided Ruth's steps to the right place. By the same token, believers today would do well to observe similar accidents more closely; perhaps they might find the same divine hand at work." Fabulous. Highly recommended.

Mind you, I love the biblical Book of Ruth. So artful in its construction, the different levels of love. Ruth, a Moabite, unknowingly challenging God's command that none of the tribes of Ammon and Moab (founded by the sons of Lot's daughters begotten by Lot) be allowed to become a Jew/Hebrew, through her prophecy that "your people will be my people, your God will be my God", to becoming the great-grandmother of David. Hubbard's study of the Book of Ruth is very thorough

and enlightening. Although it is written at a high level of content, his writing is not difficult to follow. It is fully referenced from numerous sources, including those with other interpretations. It covers aspects you already knew as well as more extended insights, interpretations, and derivations of just about everything in the book. It could easily be a higher level textbook, so some of the material might be beyond what a more biblical user will need. I had asked clergy of different religions to recommend a book of commentary on Ruth, and essentially all said the list of the best starts and ends at Hubbard's analysis.

Very impressed with the accessibility, the scholarly approach, and insight given by the author. I have used it several times for Seminary work as well as preaching opportunities.

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