

Notes & Outlines

**JOSHUA
JUDGES
RUTH**

Dr. J. Vernon McGee

JOSHUA

WRITER: Joshua (Joshua 24:26), successor to Moses (Deuteronomy 31:23). The Talmud says that Joshua wrote all but the last 5 verses and that those were written by Phineas.

“Joshua” means “Jehovah is salvation” — the same word in the New Testament is “Jesus” (as in Hebrews 4:8).

Joshua was a great general, born a slave in Egypt.

40 years old at time of Exodus (one of spies),

80 years old when he received his commission,

110 years old at his death.

He was a man of prayer, courage, dependence upon God, faith, leadership, enthusiasm, and fidelity. He is a type of Christ in name and work. As someone has commented:

Joshua shows that a man of average ability may become a leader in the church. He received his call not in flaming letters across the sky, but from an old man, who knew God and knew Joshua, and saw that he was fitted by God to be a leader.

PURPOSE: Completes redemption out of Egypt. Salvation is not only a redemption from hell, but it is a redemption to heaven.

Who [Jesus] was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:25)

TRANSITION: Up to this point Jehovah had spoken by dreams, visions, or by angelic ministry. Now a new method is introduced. The Law of Moses is the written voice of Jehovah (Joshua 1:8).

KEY VERSE:

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

(Joshua 1:3)

Joshua compares to Ephesians in the New Testament:

- It is prophetic of Israel and typical of the church.
- Read Israel’s free title to the land (Jeremiah 23:8; Ezekiel 37:21).
- Conflict and conquest go with possession.

KEY WORD: Possession

Israel's *ownership* was unconditional (Genesis 12:7; 15:18-21; 17:8). Israel's *possession* was conditional (Deuteronomy 29:9 — 30:20). Key word is not “victory” — God gets the victory. Israel gets deliverance and possession.

- Joshua 1:4 — Extent of Promised Land
13:1 — They did not possess it all.
11:16 — Joshua had conquered the land and it was available.
11:23 — Each tribe was given an allotment but had to drive out the enemy. There was to be a gradual occupation of the land by each tribe.

The Christian today is given title to spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3; Romans 5:1-11; Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Galatians 5:22, 23).

The Christian's practical possession and experience depends upon conflict and conquest (Ephesians 6:10-20; Galatians 5:25; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; Hebrews 4:11). These are never attained through the energy of the flesh, but through the power of the Holy Spirit working in the yielded life of the believer (Romans 7, 8).

COMMENT: There are several incidents in the Book of Joshua which need separate comments. We shall consider them briefly and in order.

Chapter 1 — God encourages Joshua and introduces and initiates the nation into a new way of life. The wilderness journey is over. They are no longer nomads of the desert, but dwellers in the land. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh have possessions on the wrong side of Jordan (compare Colossians 3:1-4).

Chapter 2 — Spies are sent in, not to see *if* they could enter the land, but to explore the best way. The report of these spies is in verse 24. God turns aside to save the harlot Rahab. She believed God (vv. 10-13; cf. Hebrews 11:31). The mayor of Jericho could have been saved had he, too, believed God. None needed to have perished.

Chapters 3, 4 — (See author's message, “Have You Crossed Over Jordan?”) The ark — not the rod of Moses — goes before and

divides the Jordan River. The ark goes before, carried by priests. Likewise, Christ goes before us through death, but goes with us through this life. Jordan is typical of Christ's death, not ours.

Chapter 5 — Circumcision was neglected in the wilderness. God was teaching them that the old nature is no good and the new nature has no power (Romans 7:18).

The manna ceases and the children of Israel eat the old corn in the new land. Manna is for babes in Christ and represents the days of His flesh. We feed on the living Christ today (2 Corinthians 5:16, 17).

Jesus is the captain of our salvation (vv. 13-15; Hebrews 2:10; 12:1, 2).

Chapter 6 — There may be some disagreement between John Garstang and Kathleen Kenyon about the walls in the tell at ancient Jericho, but the faith of the believer does not rest upon the shovel of the archaeologist (Hebrews 11:30). Jericho represents the world to the believer. It is strong and formidable and foreboding — the conquest depends upon faith (1 John 5:4).

Hebrews 11 reveals how faith worked in all ages in the lives of God's choicest servants as they met the world head-on and overcame by faith.

Chapters 7, 8 — (See author's message, "Ai and I.") Defeat and victory at Ai represent the flesh in the believer. The sin of Achan was sin in the camp.

Steps in sins of the flesh (7:21):

I saw — physical

I coveted — mental

I took — volitional.

No deliverance is experienced until sin is dealt with in the life of a believer (Ephesians 4:17-32; 1 John 1:9).

Chapter 9 — This begins the campaign in the south. Having driven a wedge into the heart of the land and divided it, now Joshua can go against each section piecemeal. Joshua has been compared to Alexander the Great and Hannibal as a great general. Divide and conquer was the strategy used by Joshua.

He was deceived by the Gibeonites into making a treaty with them that was contrary to the express command of God

(Deuteronomy 7:1, 2). The Gibeonites represent the devil with all his cunning and cleverness. We are no match for him (Ephesians 6:11, 16; Revelation 12:9).

Chapter 10 — Joshua conquers 5 kings of the Amorites (v. 5) as he continues the campaign in the south. He completes the campaign in the south by the destruction of Makkedah, Lachish, Libnah, Eglon, Hebron and Debir (vv. 29- 40).

This chapter contains the account of the long day of Joshua. “Did Joshua make the sun stand still?” is a question that is asked by skeptic and saint alike. Following are some proposed explanations of the long day of Joshua:

(1) It is the practice of some to avoid giving any interpretation. They ignore it entirely as if it were not worthy of comment.

(2) Some treat the language as poetic (v. 12). This is to adopt a non-literal interpretation that dismisses the miraculous from the incident entirely. Those who hold to this view generally refer to Judges 5:20 “...the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.” We refuse to dismiss this as poetic. We do not have enough information to state dogmatically that these are poetic statements and not matters of fact. It reminds us of the old bromide that poetic language is sometimes prosaic lying.

(3) Some call this a miracle of refraction. The emphasis is placed on verse 13.

(4) Some adopt the position that God stopped the entire solar system (v. 12). They make Joshua’s day 23 hours and 20 minutes. The other 40 minutes are found in 2 Kings 20:8-11.

(5) Some adopt the position that God blacked out the sun rather than continued its shining. The Berkeley Version translates it, “O sun, wait in Gibeon,” the ASV, “be silent.” Mauser in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* takes this position. Joshua had made a forced march all night (about 40 miles), attacked the enemy from the rear — came suddenly upon them. It was July — about 105° to 120° in the shade, and there was no shade. Joshua did not want more sun — he wanted less sun.

(6) The best explanation, it seems, is a combination of numbers 4 and 5. Joshua needed more light and less heat. God covered the sun with a storm of hailstones (v. 11). God slowed down the earth (v. 12). “Upon Gibeon” indicates that the sun was directly over —

bisecting Gibeon — and the moon was going down “in the valley of Aijalon.” This is a miracle!

Chapter 11 — This contains the campaign in the north and the conclusion of Joshua’s leadership in war (v. 23).

Chapter 12 — Log of Joshua’s campaigns.

Chapter 13 — Not all the land was occupied and possessed (v. 1).

Chapter 14 — Hebron given to Caleb, born a slave, companion of Joshua. These two men were the only spies who brought back a favorable report (Numbers 14:6-9).

Caleb found the fountain of youth (v. 11). He had:

- (1) Faith to forget the past
- (2) Faith to face facts
- (3) Faith to face the future

Chapter 15 — Judah’s land in the Promised Land.

Chapter 16 — Ephraim’s land in the Promised Land.

Chapter 17 — Manasseh’s land in the Promised Land.

Chapters 18, 19 — Tabernacle located at Shiloh. Other tribes’ lands in the Promised Land.

Chapter 20 — Cities of Refuge.

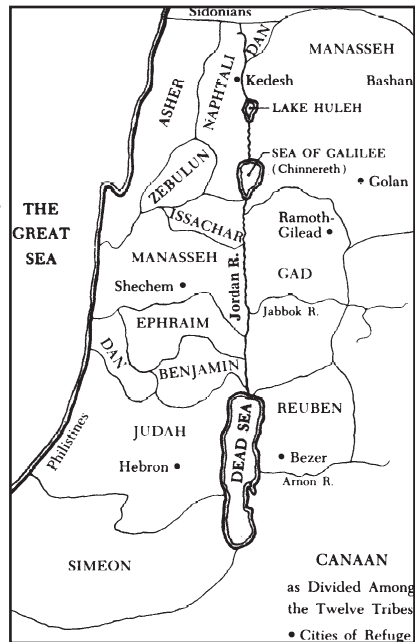
Chapter 21 — Cities for Levites.

Chapter 22 — Joshua dismisses the 2 1/2 tribes, and they return to the east side of Jordan.

They build an altar “to see” (v. 10). The altar was condemned, as there was only one altar, and it was for sacrifice.

Chapter 23 — Last message of Joshua to the leaders of the nation.

Chapter 24 — Last message of Joshua to all the tribes of Israel at Shechem (note v. 15). Verses 29-31 record the death of Joshua.



OUTLINE:

- I. The land entered, Chapters 1 — 12**
 - A. Commission and command of Joshua, 1**
 - B. Contact of spies with Rahab, 2**
 - C. Crossing the Jordan River, 3**
 - D. Construction of two memorials, 4**
 - E. Conditioned for conquest, 5**
 - F. Center of land attacked, 6 — 8**
 - 1. Conquest of Jericho, 6
 - 2. Conquest of Ai, 7, 8
 - G. Campaign in the south, 9, 10**
 - 1. Compact with the Gibeonites, 9
 - 2. Conquer 5 kings of Amorites (miracle of sun), 10
 - H. Campaign in the north, (conclusion of Joshua's leadership in war), 11**
 - I. Conquered kings listed, 12**
- II. The land divided, Chapters 13 — 22**
 - A. Command of Joshua is terminated; confirmation of land to the 2 1/2 tribes, 13**
 - B. Caleb given Hebron, 14**
 - C. Consignment of land to the tribes of Israel, 15 — 19**
 - D. Cities of refuge, 20**
 - E. Cities for Levites, 21**
 - F. Command to the 2 1/2 tribes to return home; construction of altar as a witness, 22**
- III. The last message of Joshua, Chapters 23, 24**
 - A. Call to leaders of Israel for courage and certainty, 23**
 - B. Call to all tribes of Israel for consecration and consideration of covenant with God; death of Joshua, 24**

JUDGES

A Philosophy of History

Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 14:34)

WRITER: Unknown

This book comes from the period of the monarchy, judging by the phrase which occurs 4 times, “In those days there was no king in Israel” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). Probably written by Samuel.

KEY VERSE: Judges 21:25 (last verse in book)

THEME: Backsliding — and the amazing grace of God in recovering and restoring.

PURPOSE: The Book of Judges serves a twofold purpose:

1. Historically it records the history of the nation from the death of Joshua to Samuel, the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. It bridges the gap between Joshua and the rise of the monarchy. There was no leader to take Joshua’s place in the way he had taken Moses’ place. This was the trial period of the theocracy after they entered the land.

2. Morally it is the time of the deep declension of the people as they turned from the Unseen Leader and descended to the low level of “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; also compare Judges 1:1 with 20:18). This should have been an era of glowing progress, but it was a dark day of repeated failure.

This course can be plotted like a hoop rolling down the hill of time. The steps of a nation’s downfall are outlined in the last division of the book (see outline). Isaiah, chapter 1, presents these same fatal steps downward that eventually led to the final captivity of the nation.



COMMENT: The *New Scofield Reference Bible* gives as the theme of the Book of Judges “Defeat and Deliverance.” This is unusually appropriate. There is, however, another aspect which this book emphasizes — disappointment.

The children of Israel entered the Land of Promise with high hopes and exuberant expectation. You would expect these people — who were delivered out of Egypt, led through the wilderness, and brought into the land with such demonstration of God’s power and direction — to attain a high level of living and victory in the land. Such was not the case. They failed ignobly and suffered miserable defeat after defeat.

God raised up judges to deliver His people when they apostatized and cried to Him in their misery. The book takes its name from these men whom God raised up. The judges exercised their ministry for the most part in a local and restricted area.

All the judges were themselves limited in their capabilities. In fact, each one seemed to have some defect and handicap which was not a hindrance but became a positive asset under the sovereign direction of God. None of them were national leaders who appealed to the total nation as were Moses and Joshua. The record is not continuous but rather a spotty account of local judges in limited sections of the nation.

I. Introduction to era of the judges, Chapters 1, 2

Chapter 1 — Mentioned are 9 of the 12 tribes in their failure to win a total victory in driving out the enemy. The 3 not mentioned are Reuben, Issachar, and Gad. It must be assumed that they likewise failed. Each tribe faced a particular enemy. At no time was the entire nation engaged in a warfare against any particular enemy. The weakness of the tribes is revealed in verse 3 where Judah called upon Simeon for help in his local situation.

Chapter 2 — A report on the sad condition of the people, that eventually required judges to be raised up to deliver them. This chapter outlines the entire book and God’s philosophy of human history. The words for “judge,” “judgment,” and “judged” are used 22 times. The word “evil” occurs 14 times. The people did evil and God raised up judges (vv. 11, 16). The people did evil because they did not obey God (vv. 2, 17). They did not obey because they did

not believe God (v. 20). The cycle of history that they followed is given in verses 11 through 16.

II. Era of the judges, Chapters 3 — 16

Chapter 3 — The children of Israel intermarried with Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites among whom they lived. Israel did evil, forgot God, and served Baalim. God delivered them into slavery.

Othniel, the first judge, was raised up to deliver them. His only qualification seems to be that he was the nephew of Caleb and married his daughter.

Ehud, the second judge, was raised up to deliver Israel from the servitude of Eglon, king of Moab. His qualification was his being left-handed, which enabled him to gain the presence of the king without his concealed dagger being discovered.

Shamgar was the third judge, who was an expert with an ox goad. He used it as an instrument of war against the Philistines and delivered Israel.

All of the judges had some defect, odd characteristic or handicap that God used. The judges reveal that God can use any man or woman who is willing to be used.

Chapter 4 — Deborah, the fourth judge, was a remarkable person and a great mother whom God raised up to deliver Israel from Jabin, king of Canaan. Deborah probably was the only judge, recorded in the Book of Judges, to rule over all of Israel. (Eli, as well as Samuel, did rule over all of Israel as judges, see 1 Samuel 2:29 — 3:21.)

Because no man was willing to take the lead, Deborah did (v. 8). She pointed out to Barak (the fifth judge) that she would go but it would not be to his honor. Jael, a woman, slew Sisera, the captain of Canaan's forces.

Chapter 5 — Contains the song of victory of Deborah and Barak. The lawlessness of the day caused Deborah to take the lead as a mother for the sake of her children (vv. 6, 7). There are remarkable features in this song (vv. 19, 20, 23).

Chapter 6 — "Children of Israel did evil" (v. 1) is the reason for their being delivered into the hands of the Midianites. Gideon, the sixth judge, was raised up to deliver Israel. All the judges, as we

have indicated, had some weakness, defect, or unusual characteristic that God actually exploited in order to deliver His people. Gideon was a coward at heart. His threshing grain at the winepress, instead of on the threshing floor of a hilltop in sight of the Midianites, reveals this. Here is where the angel of the Lord, with a note of sarcasm, called him, “Thou mighty man of valor.” Gideon pleads his weakness and littleness as an excuse. God equips him and encourages him in his first exploit.

Chapter 7 — Here is where the choosing of the 300 takes place. He had an original army of 32,000. This was reduced by ferreting out the fearful and indifferent. Gideon equipped the 300 with pitchers, lamps and trumpets. The tactics of Gideon produced a riot in the army of the Midianites. Victory was Gideon’s.

Chapter 8 — Israel wanted to make Gideon king, which he refused. Gideon’s answer is notable (v. 23). Gideon died, after which Israel went again into base idolatry.

Chapter 9 — In most records Abimelech, the wicked son of Gideon, is not rated a judge. James M. Gray wrote, “The usurped rule of Abimelech, the fratricide, is not usually counted.” He did rule 3 years after slaying 70 other sons of Gideon. He made himself king. His abortive reign reveals the truth of Daniel 4:17 — “...the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men...and setteth up over it the basest of men.”

“Like priest, like people” is the principle here, and God judged not only Abimelech but also the men of Shechem for making him king (vv. 56, 57).

Chapter 10 — Tola, the seventh judge, did nothing worthy to record during his tenure in office of 23 years.

Jair, the eighth judge, provided 30 donkeys for his 30 sons to ride upon. If he had lived in our day they would have driven Jaguars.

Chapter 11 — Jephthah, the ninth judge, was an illegitimate son of a harlot. He was an outcast until Israel was at war with Ammon and needed a military leader. Jephthah had become a leader of a band of desperados. He was a sort of Robin Hood (v. 3). God used him to deliver and rule over Israel in order to humble them.

The problem in this chapter is one of human sacrifice. Did Jephthah offer his daughter as a human sacrifice? Jephthah made a rash and unnecessary vow — his cause was just (v. 27). God had

called him, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (v. 29). However, Scripture never finds fault with him (Hebrews 11:32). Abraham was not permitted to offer Isaac, and God would have prevented Jephthah from murder if his intentions were to slay his daughter. Verse 31 offers the solution. The better translation of the last part of the verse should be “shall surely be the Lord’s or I will offer a burnt offering.” His vow was that she should never marry, which was worse than death for a Hebrew woman. With this in mind read vv. 37, 39 and 40.

Chapter 12 — Ibzan, the tenth judge, spent his 7 years as judge making marriages for his 30 sons and 30 daughters.

Elon, the eleventh judge, did nothing worthy to record in his tenure of 10 years.

Abdon, the twelfth judge, got 70 donkeys for his 40 sons and 30 nephews during his 8 years as judge.

Chapters 13 — 16 — The monotonous repetition of “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD” opens chapter 13, and this is the last time it occurs.

The birth of Samson was miraculous (vv. 2-5). Samson had a golden opportunity to deliver Israel. He never did. He is one of the two most colossal failures in Scripture (Solomon is the other one). He was a Nazarite, and long hair was the badge of his office. There was no strength in him. He was anemic, a weakling both physically and morally, a mama’s boy, a regular sissy, a midget in mind and muscle. Three significant verses tell his story:

(1) Secret of Samson’s **success** —

For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb. And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

(Judges 13:5)

(2) Secret of Samson’s **strength** —

And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

(Judges 13:25)

(3) Secret of Samson’s **failure** —

And she said, The Philistines are upon thee, Samson.

And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he knew not that the LORD was departed from him. (Judges 16:20)

Note the parallel between the life of Samson and that of Jesus Christ:

- Comparison:*
1. Both births were foretold by an angel.
 2. Both were separated to God from the womb.
 3. Both were Nazarites.
 4. Both went in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 5. Both were rejected by their people.
 6. Both destroyed (or will destroy) their enemies.
- Contrast:*
1. Samson lived a life of sin; Jesus' life was sinless.
 2. Samson at the time of death prayed, "...O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judges 16:28). Jesus prayed, "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).
 3. In death Samson's arms were outstretched in wrath; in death Jesus' arms were outstretched in love.
 4. Samson died; Jesus Christ lives!

III. Results of era of the judges, Chapters 17 — 21

Some label this section an appendix to the Book of Judges. We prefer to see here God's philosophy of history (see outline).

The period of the judges is characterized by
compromise,
corruption,
confusion.

Chapters 17, 18 — This period of apostasy began in the tribe of Dan in their desire to enlarge their borders. It was another lapse into idolatry. It all can be traced to the home of Micah and his mother who spoiled him (17:2). The priest, hired by Micah to tend his idols, advised Dan to proceed with a selfish plan. This was the sweet talk of a hired preacher (18:6).

Chapters 19 — 21 — This period is similar to the former in

that it reveals compromise, corruption and confusion. This episode centers about the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe engaged in gross immorality which led to civil war. It began with the men of Benjamin abusing and finally murdering a Levite's wife. The other tribes try to exterminate the tribe of Benjamin. This period ends in total national corruption and confusion, and with this the Book of Judges concludes:

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

OUTLINE:

I. Introduction to era of the judges, Chapters 1, 2

- A. Condition of nation after death of Joshua (revealed in limited victories of tribes of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, Dan), 1
- B. God feeds into computer of history Israel's cycle in period of the judges, 2

II. Era of the judges, Chapters 3 — 16

- A. 1st Apostasy; conquered by Mesopotamia; delivered through Othniel, the judge, 3:1-11
- B. 2nd Apostasy; conquered by Moabites and Philistines; delivered through Ehud and Shamgar, the judges, 3:12-31
- C. 3rd Apostasy; conquered by Jabin, king of Canaan; delivered through Deborah and Barak, the judges, 4:1 — 5:31
- D. 4th Apostasy; conquered by Midian; delivered through Gideon, the judge, 6:1 — 8:32
- E. 5th Apostasy; civil war; delivered through Abimelech, Tola, Jair, the judges, 8:33 — 10:5
- F. 6th Apostasy; conquered by Philistines and Ammonites; delivered through Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, the judges, 10:6 — 12:15
- G. 7th Apostasy; conquered by Philistines; delivered partially through Samson, the judge, 13 — 16

III. Results of era of the judges (confusion), Chapters 17 — 21

- A. Religious apostasy (the temple), 17, 18
- B. Moral awfulness (the home), 19
- C. Political anarchy (the state), 20, 21

RUTH

An addendum to the Book of Judges. A brochure of beauty. A bright picture on the black background of the judges.

WRITER: Samuel could have been the writer

KEY VERSE: Ruth 3:18

THEME: The kinsman-redeemer

FEATURES:

1. A love story without using the word “love.”
2. The story of a prodigal family who went to the far country.
3. The only example of the law of the kinsman-redeemer (Hebrew *goel*) in action. Also shows how other laws of the Mosaic system operated.
4. Furnishes the link between the tribe of Judah and David. The genealogy at the end of the book becomes a most important document. It is found again in the first chapter of Matthew.
5. A lovely picture of Christ and the church.

COMMENT: We prefer not to break up this beautiful love story with notes and outlines of extended length. However we refer the reader to our book, *Ruth and Esther: Women of Faith* in which we attempt to tell this love story with all of its tenderness, sweetness, and loveliness.

OUTLINE:

- I. In the land of Moab, Chapter 1
- II. In the field of Boaz, Chapter 2
- III. On the threshing floor of Boaz, Chapter 3
- IV. In the heart and home of Boaz, Chapter 4

These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Davis, John J. *Conquest and Crisis — Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1969.
- Enns, Paul P. *Joshua*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981.
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- Meyer, F. B. *Joshua and the Land of Promise*. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, n.d. (A rich devotional study.)
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