
GENESIS 19:1 The two angels came to Sodom at evening. Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them. He bowed himself with his face to the earth,

The two angels mentioned in the preceding chapter, come in the evening to Sodom, Gen 19:1. Lot, who was sitting at the gate, invites them to enter his house, take some refreshment, and tarry all night; which they at first refuse, Gen 19:2; but on being pressingly solicited, they at last comply, Gen 19:3. The abominable conduct of the men of Sodom, Gen 19:4, Gen 19:5. Lot's deep concern for the honor and safety of his guests, which leads him to make a most exceptionable proposal to those wicked men, Gen 19:6-8. The violent proceedings of the Sodomites, Gen 19:9. Lot rescued from their barbarity by the angels, who smite them with blindness, Gen 19:10, Gen 19:11. The angels exhort Lot and his family to flee from that wicked place, as God was about to destroy it, Gen 19:12, Gen 19:13. Lot's fruitless exhortation to his sons-in-law, Gen 19:14. The angels hasten Lot and his family to depart, Gen 19:15, Gen 19:16. Their exhortation, Gen 19:17. Lot's request, Gen 19:18-20. He is permitted to escape to Zoar, Gen 19:21-23. Fire and brimstone are rained down from heaven upon all the cities of the plain, by which they are entirely destroyed, Gen 19:24, Gen 19:25. Lot's wife, looking behind, becomes a pillar of salt, Gen 19:26. Abraham, early in the morning, discovers the desolation of those iniquitous cities, Gen 19:27-29. Lot, fearing to continue in Zoar, went with his two daughters to the mountain, and dwelt in a cave, Gen 19:30. The strange conduct of his daughters, and his unhappy deception, Gen 19:31-36. Moab and Ammon born, from whom sprang the Moabites and Ammonites, Gen 19:37, Gen 19:38.

Verse 1

Two angels - The two referred to Gen 18:22.

Sat in the gate - Probably, in order to prevent unwary travelers from being entrapped by his wicked townsmen, he waited at the gate of the city to bring the strangers he might meet with to his own house, as well as to transact his own business. Or, as the gate was the place of judgment, he might have been sitting there as magistrate to hear and determine disputes.

Bowed himself - Not through religious reverence, for he did not know the quality of his guests; but through the customary form of civility. See on verses Gen 18:3-5 (note) of the preceding chapter.

GENESIS 19:2 and he said, "See now, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, stay all night, wash your feet, and you can rise up early, and go on your way." They said, "No, but we will stay in the street all night."

Verse 2

Nay; but we will abide in the street - Instead of אָלּוֹ lo, nay, some MSS. have לֹא lo, to him; "And they said unto him, for we lodge in the street." where, nevertheless, the negation is understood. Knowing the disposition of the inhabitants, and appearing in the mere character of travelers, they preferred the open street to any house; but as Lot pressed them vehemently, and they knew him to be a righteous man, not yet willing to make themselves known, they consented to take shelter under his hospitable roof. Our Lord, willing for the time being to conceal his person from the knowledge of the

disciples going to Emmaus, made as though he would go farther, Luk 24:13; but at last, like the angels here, yielded to the importunity of his disciples, and went into their lodgings.

GENESIS 19:3 He urged them greatly, and they came in with him, and entered into his house. He made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

GENESIS 19:4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter.

GENESIS 19:5 They called to Lot, and said to him, "Where are the men who came in to you this night? Bring them out to us, that we may have sex with them."

Verse 5

Where are the men which came in to thee, etc. - This account justifies the character given of this depraved people in the preceding chapter, Gen 18:20, and in Gen 23:13. As their crime was the deepest disgrace to human nature, so it is too bad to be described; in the sacred text it is sufficiently marked; and the iniquity which, from these most abominable wretches, has been called Sodomy, is punished in our country with death.

GENESIS 19:6 Lot went out to them to the door, and shut the door after him.

GENESIS 19:7 He said, "Please, my brothers, don't act so wickedly.

GENESIS 19:8 See now, I have two virgin daughters. Please let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them what seems good to you. Only don't do anything to these men, because they have come under the shadow of my roof."

Verse 8

Behold now, I have two daughters - Nothing but that sacred light in which the rights of hospitality were regarded among the eastern nations, could either justify or palliate this proposal of Lot. A man who had taken a stranger under his care and protection, was bound to defend him even at the expense of his own life. In this light the rights of hospitality are still regarded in Asiatic countries; and on these high notions only, the influence of which an Asiatic mind alone can properly appreciate, Lot's conduct on this occasion can be at all excused: but even then, it was not only the language of anxious solicitude, but of unwarrantable haste.

GENESIS 19:9 They said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one fellow came in to live as a foreigner, and he appoints himself a judge. Now will we deal worse with you, than with them!" They pressed hard on the man Lot, and drew near to break the door.

Verse 9

And he will needs be a judge - So his sitting in the gate is perhaps a farther proof of his being there in a magisterial capacity, as some have supposed.

GENESIS 19:10 But the men reached out their hand, and brought Lot into the house to them, and shut the door.

GENESIS 19:11 They struck the men who were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

Verse 11

And they smote the men - with blindness - This has been understood two ways:

1. The angels, by the power which God had given them, deprived these wicked men of a proper and regular use of their sight, so as either totally to deprive them of it, or render it so confused that they could no longer distinguish objects; or,
 2. They caused such a deep darkness to take place, that they could not find Lot's door. The author of the book of The Wisdom of Solomon was evidently of this latter opinion, for he says they were compassed about with horrible great darkness, Gen 19:17. See a similar case of Elisha and the Syrians, 2Kgs 6:18, etc.
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GENESIS 19:12 The men said to Lot, "Do you have anybody else here? Sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whoever you have in the city, bring them out of the place:

Verse 12

Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law - Here there appears to be but one meant, as the word חתן chathan is in the singular number; but in Gen 19:14 the word is plural, חתניו chathanaiv, his sons-in-law. There were only two in number; as we do not hear that Lot had more than two daughters: and these seem not to have been actually married to those daughters, but only betrothed, as is evident from what Lot says, Gen 19:8; for they had not known man, but were the spouses elect of those who are here called his sons-in-law. But though these might be reputed as a part of Lot's family, and entitled on this account to God's protection, yet it is sufficiently plain that they did not escape the perdition of these wicked men; and the reason is given, Gen 19:14, they received the solemn warning as a ridiculous tale, the creature of Lot's invention, or the offspring of his fear. Therefore they made no provision for their escape, and doubtless perished, notwithstanding the sincerely offered grace, in the perdition that fell on this ungodly city.

GENESIS 19:13 for we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

GENESIS 19:14 Lot went out, and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters, and said, "Get up! Get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be joking.

GENESIS 19:15 When the morning came, then the angels hurried Lot, saying, "Get up! Take your wife, and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city."

GENESIS 19:16 But he lingered; and the men grabbed his hand, his wife's hand, and his two daughters' hands, the LORD being merciful to him; and they took him out, and set him outside of the city.

Verse 16

While he lingered - Probably in affectionate though useless entreaties to prevail on the remaining parts of his family to escape from the destruction that was now descending; laid hold upon his hand - pulled them away by mere force, the Lord being merciful; else they had been left to perish in their lingering, as the others were in their gainsaying.

GENESIS 19:17 It came to pass, when they had taken them out, that he said, "Escape for your life! Don't look behind you, and don't stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be consumed!"

Verse 17

When they had brought them forth, etc. - Every word here is emphatic, Escape for thy Life; thou art in the most imminent danger of perishing; thy life and thy soul are both at stake. Look not behind thee - thou hast but barely time enough to escape from the judgment that is now descending; no lingering, or thou art lost! one look back may prove fatal to thee, and God commands thee to avoid it. Neither stay thou in all the plain, because God will destroy that as well as the city. Escape to the mountain, on which these judgments shall not light, and which God has appointed thee for a place of refuge; lest thou be Consumed. It is not an ordinary judgment that is coming; a fire from heaven shall burn up the cities, the plain, and all that remain in the cities and in the plain. Both the beginning and end of this exhortation are addressed to his personal feelings. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life;" and self-preservation is the first law of nature, to which every other consideration is minor and unimportant.

GENESIS 19:18 Lot said to them, "Oh, not so, my lord.

GENESIS 19:19 See now, your servant has found favour in your sight, and you have magnified your loving kindness, which you have shown to me in saving my life. I can't escape to the mountain, lest evil overtake me, and I die.

Verse 19

I cannot escape to the mountain - He saw the destruction so near, that he imagined he should not have time sufficient to reach the mountain before it arrived. He did not consider that God could give no command to his creatures that it would be impossible for them to fulfill; but the hurry and perturbation of his mind will at once account for and excuse this gross oversight.

GENESIS 19:20 See now, this city is near to flee to, and it is a little one. Oh let me escape there (isn't it a little one?), and my soul will live."

Verse 20

It is a little one - Probably Lot wished to have it for an inheritance, and therefore pleaded its being a little one, that his request might be the more readily granted. Or he might suppose, that being a little city, it was less depraved than Sodom and Gomorrah, and therefore not so ripe for punishment; which was probably the case.

GENESIS 19:21 He said to him, "Behold, I have granted your request concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.

Verse 21

See, I have accepted thee - How prevalent is prayer with God! Far from refusing to grant a reasonable petition, he shows himself as if under embarrassment to deny any.

GENESIS 19:22 Hurry, escape there, for I can't do anything until you get there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Verse 22

I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither - So these heavenly messengers had the strictest commission to take care of Lot and his family; and even the purposes of Divine justice could not be accomplished on the rebellious, till this righteous man and his family had escaped from the place. A proof of Abraham's assertion, The Judge of all the earth will do right.

The name of the city was called Zoar - צוער Tsoar, Little, its former name being Bela.

GENESIS 19:23 The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

GENESIS 19:24 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and on Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of the sky.

Verse 24

The Lord rained - brimstone and fire from the Lord - As all judgment is committed to the Son of God, many of the primitive fathers and several modern divines have supposed that the words ויהוה vaihovah and יהוה מאת יהוה meeth Yehovah imply, Jehovah the Son raining brimstone and fire from Jehovah the Father; and that this place affords no mean proof of the proper Divinity of our blessed

Redeemer. It may be so; but though the point is sufficiently established elsewhere, it does not appear to me to be plainly indicated here. And it is always better on a subject of this kind not to have recourse to proofs which require proofs to confirm them. It must however be granted that two persons mentioned as Jehovah in one verse, is both a strange and curious circumstance; and it will appear more remarkable when we consider that the person called Jehovah, who conversed with Abraham, (see Genesis 18), and sent those two angels to bring Lot and his family out of this devoted place, and seems himself after he left off talking with Abraham to have ascended to heaven, Gen 19:33, does not any more appear on this occasion till we hear that Jehovah rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven. This certainly gives much countenance to the opinion referred to above, though still it may fall short of positive proof.

Brimstone and fire - The word גפרית gophrith, which we translate brimstone, is of very uncertain derivation. It is evidently used metaphorically, to point out the utmost degrees of punishment executed on the most flagitious criminals, in Deu 29:23; Job 18:15; Psa 11:6; Isa 34:9; Eze 38:22. And as hell, or an everlasting separation from God and the glory of his power, is the utmost punishment that can be inflicted on sinners, hence brimstone and fire are used in Scripture to signify the torments in that place of punishment. See Isa 30:33; Rev 14:10; Rev 19:20; Rev 20:10; Rev 21:8. We may safely suppose that it was quite possible that a shower of nitrous particles might have been precipitated from the atmosphere, here, as in many other places, called heaven, which, by the action of fire or the electric fluid, would be immediately ignited, and so consume the cities; and, as we have already seen that the plains about Sodom and Gomorrah abounded with asphaltus or bitumen pits, (see Gen 14:10), that what is particularly meant here in reference to the plain is the setting fire to this vast store of inflammable matter by the agency of lightning or the electric fluid; and this, in the most natural and literal manner, accounts for the whole plain being burnt up, as that plain abounded with this bituminous substance; and thus we find three agents employed in the total ruin of these cities, and all the circumjacent plain:

1. Innumerable nitrous particles precipitated from the atmosphere.
2. The vast quantity of asphaltus or bitumen which abounded in that country: and,
3. Lightning or the electric spark, which ignited the nitre and bitumen, and thus consumed both the cities and the plain or champaign country in which they were situated.

GENESIS 19:25 He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew on the ground.

Verse 25

And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain - This forms what is called the lake Asphaltites, Dead Sea, or Salt Sea, which, according to the most authentic accounts, is about seventy miles in length, and eighteen in breadth.

The most strange and incredible tales are told by many of the ancients, and by many of the moderns, concerning the place where these cities stood. Common fame says that the waters of this sea are so thick that a stone will not sink in them, so tough and clammy that the most boisterous wind cannot ruffle them, so deadly that no fish can live in them, and that if a bird happen to fly over the lake, it is killed by the poisonous effluvia proceeding from the waters; that scarcely any verdure

can grow near the place, and that in the vicinity where there are any trees they bear a most beautiful fruit, but when you come to open it you find nothing but ashes! and that the place was burning long after the apostles' times. These and all similar tales may be safely pronounced great exaggerations of facts, or fictions of ignorant, stupid, and superstitious monks, or impositions of unprincipled travelers, who, knowing that the common people are delighted with the marvelous, have stuffed their narratives with such accounts merely to procure a better sale for their books.

The truth is, the waters are exceedingly salt, far beyond the usual saltiness of the sea, and hence it is called the Salt Sea. In consequence of this circumstance bodies will float in it that would sink in common salt water, and probably it is on this account that few fish can live in it. But the monks of St. Saba affirmed to Dr. Shaw, that they had seen fish caught in it; and as to the reports of any noxious quality in the air, or in the evaporations from its surface, the simple fact is, lumps of bitumen often rise from the bottom to its surface, and exhale a fetid odor which does not appear to have any thing poisonous in it. Dr. Pococke swam in it for nearly a quarter of an hour, and felt no kind of inconvenience; the water, he says, is very clear, and having brought away a bottle of it, he "had it analyzed, and found it to contain no substances besides salt and a little alum."

As there are frequent eruptions of a bituminous matter from the bottom of this lake, which seem to argue a subterraneous fire, hence the accounts that this place was burning even after the days of the apostles. And this phenomenon still continues, for "masses of bitumen," says Dr. Shaw, "in large hemispheres, are raised at certain times from the bottom, which, as soon as they touch the surface, and are thereby acted upon by the external air, burst at once, with great smoke and noise, like the pulvis fulminans of the chemists, and disperse themselves in a thousand pieces. But this only happens near the shore, for in greater depths the eruptions are supposed to discover themselves in such columns of smoke as are now and then observed to arise from the lake. And perhaps to such eruptions as these we may attribute that variety of pits and hollows, not unlike the traces of many of our ancient limekilns, which are found in the neighborhood of this lake. The bitumen is in all probability accompanied from the bottom with sulphur, as both of them are found promiscuously upon the shore, and the latter is precisely the same with common native sulphur; the other is friable, yielding upon friction, or by being put into the fire, a fetid smell." The bitumen, after having been some time exposed to the air, becomes indurated like a stone. I have some portions of it before me, brought by a friend of mine from the spot; it is very black, hard, and on friction yields a fetid odor.

For several curious particulars on this subject, see Dr. Pococke's Travels, vol. ii., part 1, chap. 9, and Dr. Shaw's Travels, 4th. edit., p. 346, etc.

GENESIS 19:26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

Verse 26

She became a pillar of salt - The vast variety of opinions, both ancient and modern, on the crime of Lot's wife, her change, and the manner in which that change was effected, are in many cases as unsatisfactory as they are ridiculous. On this point the sacred Scripture says little. God had commanded Lot and his family not to look behind them; the wife of Lot disobeyed this command; she looked back from behind him - Lot, her husband, and she became a pillar of salt. This is all the information the inspired historian has thought proper to give us on this subject; it is true the account

is short, but commentators and critics have made it long enough by their laborious glosses. The opinions which are the most probable are the following:

1. "Lot's wife, by the miraculous power of God, was changed into a mass of rock salt, probably retaining the human figure."
2. "Tarrying too long in the plain, she was struck with lightning and enveloped in the bituminous and sulphuric matter which abounded in that country, and which, not being exposed afterwards to the action of the fire, resisted the air and the wet, and was thus rendered permanent."
3. "She was struck dead and consumed in the burning up of the plain; and this judgment on her disobedience being recorded, is an imperishable memorial of the fact itself, and an everlasting warning to sinners in general, and to backsliders or apostates in particular."

On these opinions it may be only necessary to state that the two first understand the text literally, and that the last considers it metaphorically. That God might in a moment convert this disobedient woman into a pillar or mass of salt, or any other substance, there can be no doubt. Or that, by continuing in the plain till the brimstone and fire descended from heaven, she might be struck dead with lightning, and indurated or petrified on the spot, is as possible. And that the account of her becoming a pillar of salt may be designed to be understood metaphorically, is also highly probable. It is certain that salt is frequently used in the Scriptures as an emblem of incorruption, durability, etc. Hence a covenant of salt, Num 18:19, is a perpetual covenant, one that is ever to be in full force, and never broken; on this ground a pillar of salt may signify no more in this case than an everlasting monument against criminal curiosity, unbelief, and disobedience.

Could we depend upon the various accounts given by different persons who pretend to have seen the wife of Lot standing in her complete human form, with all her distinctive marks about her, the difficulty would be at an end. But we cannot depend on these accounts; they are discordant, improbable, ridiculous, and often grossly absurd. Some profess to have seen her as a heap of salt; others, as a rock of salt; others, as a complete human being as to shape, proportion of parts, etc., etc., but only petrified.

This human form, according to others, has still resident in it a miraculous continual energy; break off a finger, a toe, an arm, etc., it is immediately reproduced, so that though multitudes of curious persons have gone to see this woman, and every one has brought away a part of her, yet still she is found by the next comer a complete human form! To crown this absurd description, the author of the poem *De Sodoma*, usually attributed to Tertullian, and annexed to his works, represents her as yet instinct with a portion of animal life, which is unequivocally designated by certain signs which every month produces. I shall transcribe the whole passage and refer to my author; and as I have given above the sense of the whole, my readers must excuse me from giving a more literal translation: - - et simul illic

In fragilem mutata salem, stetit ipsa sepulchrum,
Ipsaque imago sibi, formam sine corpore servans
Durat adhuc etenim nuda statione sub aethra,
Nec pluviis dilapsa situ, nec diruta ventis.
Quinettam, si quis mutilaverit advena formam,
Protinus ex sese suggestu vulnera complet.
Dicitur et vivens alio sub corpore sexus
Munificos solito dispungere sanguine menses
Teetulliani Opera, vol. ii., p. 731. Edit. Oberthur.

The sentiment in the last lines is supported by Irenaeus, who assures us that, though still remaining as a pillar of salt, the statue, in form and other natural accidents, exhibits decisive proofs of its original. *Jam non caro corruptibilis, sed statua salis semper manens, et, per naturalia, ea quae sunt consuetudinis hominis ostendens, lib. iv., c. 51.* To complete this absurdity, this father makes her an emblem of the true Church, which, though she suffers much, and often loses whole members, yet preserves the pillar of salt, that is, the foundation of the true faith, etc. See Calmet.

Josephus says that this pillar was standing in his time, and that himself had seen it: *Εἰς στηλὴν ἄλων μετεβαλὲν, ἰστορικὰ δ' αὐτὴν· ἐτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν διαμένει.* Ant. lib. i., c. xi. 3, 4.

St. Clement, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 2, follows Josephus, and asserts that Lot's wife was remaining even at that time as a pillar of salt.

Authors of respectability and credit who have since traveled into the Holy Land, and made it their business to inquire into this subject in the most particular and careful manner, have not been able to meet with any remains of this pillar; and all accounts begin now to be confounded in the pretty general concession, both of Jews and Gentiles, that either the statue does not now remain, or that some of the heaps of salt or blocks of salt rock which are to be met with in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, may be the remains of Lot's wife! All speculations on this subject are perfectly idle; and if the general prejudice in favor of the continued existence of this monument of God's justice had not been very strong, I should not have deemed myself justified in entering so much at length into the subject. Those who profess to have seen it, have in general sufficiently invalidated their own testimony by the monstrous absurdities with which they have encumbered their relations. Had Lot's wife been changed in the way that many have supposed, and had she been still preserved somewhere in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea, surely we might expect some account of it in after parts of the Scripture history; but it is never more mentioned in the Bible, and occurs nowhere in the New Testament but in the simple reference of our Lord to the judgment itself, as a warning to the disobedient and backsliding, Luk 17:32 : Remember Lot's wife!

GENESIS 19:27 Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD.

Verse 27

Abraham got up early in the morning - Anxious to know what was the effect of the prayers which he had offered to God the preceding day; what must have been his astonishment when he found that all these cities, with the plain which resembled the garden of the Lord, Gen 13:10, burnt up, and the smoke ascending like the smoke of a furnace, and was thereby assured that even God himself could not discover ten righteous persons in four whole cities!

GENESIS 19:28 He looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and looked, and saw that the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace.

GENESIS 19:29 When God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the middle of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.

Verse 29

God remembered Abraham - Though he did not descend lower than ten righteous persons, (see Gen 18:32), yet the Lord had respect to the spirit of his petitions, and spared all those who could be called righteous, and for Abraham's sake offered salvation to all the family of Lot, though neither his sons-in-law elect nor his own wife ultimately profited by it. The former ridiculed the warning; and the latter, though led out by the hands of the angel, yet by breaking the command of God perished with the other gainsayers.

GENESIS 19:30 Lot went up out of Zoar, and lived in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to live in Zoar. He lived in a cave with his two daughters.

Verse 30

Lot went up out of Zoar - From seeing the universal desolation that had fallen upon the land, and that the fire was still continuing its depredations, he feared to dwell in Zoar, lest that also should be consumed, and then went to those very mountains to which God had ordered him at first to make his escape. Foolish man is ever preferring his own wisdom to that of his Maker. It was wrong at first not to betake himself to the mountain; it was wrong in the next place to go to it when God had given him the assurance that Zoar should be spared for his sake. Both these cases argue a strange want of faith, not only in the truth, but also in the providence, of God. Had he still dwelt at Zoar, the shameful transaction afterwards recorded had in all probability not taken place.

GENESIS 19:31 The firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in to us in the way of all the earth.

Verse 31

Our father is old - And consequently not likely to re-marry; and there is not a man in the earth - none left, according to their opinion in all the land of Canaan, of their own family and kindred; and they might think it unlawful to match with others, such as the inhabitants of Zoar, who they knew had been devoted to destruction as well as those of Sodom and Gomorrah, and were only saved at the earnest request of their father; and probably while they lived among them they found them ripe enough for punishment, and therefore would have thought it both dangerous and criminal to have formed any matrimonial connections with them.

GENESIS 19:32 Come, let's make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve our father's seed."

Verse 32

Come, let us make our father drink wine - On their flight from Zoar it is probable they had brought with them certain provisions to serve them for the time being, and the wine here mentioned among the rest.

After considering all that has been said to criminate both Lot and his daughters in this business, I cannot help thinking that the transaction itself will bear a more favorable construction than that which has been generally put on it. 1. It does not appear that it was through any base or sensual desires that the daughters of Lot wished to deceive their father. 2. They might have thought that it would have been criminal to have married into any other family, and they knew that their husbands elect, who were probably of the same kindred, had perished in the overthrow of Sodom. 3. They might have supposed that there was no other way left to preserve the family, and consequently that righteousness for which it had been remarkable, but the way which they now took.

4. They appear to have supposed that their father would not come into the measure, because he would have considered it as profane; yet, judging the measure to be expedient and necessary, they endeavored to sanctify the improper means used, by the goodness of the end at which they aimed; a doctrine which, though resorted to by many, should be reprobated by all. Acting on this bad principle they caused their father to drink wine. See note on Gen 19:38.

GENESIS 19:33 They made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father. He didn't know when she lay down, nor when she arose.

Verse 33

And he perceived not when she lay down, nor when, etc. - That is, he did not perceive the time she came to his bed, nor the time she quitted it; consequently did not know who it was that had lain with him. In this transaction Lot appears to me to be in many respects excusable. 1. He had no accurate knowledge of what took place either on the first or second night, therefore he cannot be supposed to have been drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. That he must have been sensible that some person had been in his bed, it would be ridiculous to deny; but he might have judged it to have been some of his female domestics, which it is reasonable to suppose he might have brought from Zoar. 2. It is very likely that he was deceived in the wine, as well as in the consequences; either he knew not the strength of the wine, or wine of a superior power had been given to him on this occasion. As he had in general followed the simple pastoral life, it is not to be wondered at if he did not know the intoxicating power of wine, and being an old man, and unused to it, a small portion would be sufficient to overcome him; sound sleep would soon, at his time of life, be the effect of taking the liquor to which he was unaccustomed, and cause him to forget the effects of his intoxication. Except in this case, his moral conduct stands unblemished in the sacred writings; and as the whole transaction, especially as it relates to him, is capable of an interpretation not wholly injurious to his piety, both reason and religion conjoin to recommend that explanation. As to his daughters, let their ignorance of the real state of the case plead for them, as far as that can go; and let it be remembered that their sin was of that very peculiar nature as never to be capable of becoming a precedent. For it is scarcely possible that any should ever be able to plead similar circumstances in vindication of a similar line of conduct.

GENESIS 19:34 It came to pass on the next day, that the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine again, tonight. You go in, and lie with him, that we may preserve our father's seed."

GENESIS 19:35 They made their father drink wine that night also. The younger went and lay with him. He didn't know when she lay down, nor when she got up.

GENESIS 19:36 Thus both of Lot's daughters were with child by their father.

GENESIS 19:37 The firstborn bore a son, and named him Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day.

Verse 37

Called his name Moab - This name is generally interpreted of the father, or, according to Calmet, מואב Moab, the waters of the father.

GENESIS 19:38 The younger also bore a son, and called his name Ben Ammi. He is the father of the children of Ammon to this day.

Verse 38

Ben-ammi - בן עמי Ben-ammi, the son of my people. Both these names seem to justify the view taken of this subject above, viz., that it was merely to preserve the family that the daughters of Lot made use of the above expedient; and hence we do not find that they ever attempted to repeat it, which, had it been done for any other purpose, they certainly would not have failed to do. On this subject Origen, in his fifth homily on Genesis, has these remarkable words: Ubi hic libidinis culpa, ubi incesti criminis arguitur? Quomodo dabitur in Vitlo Quod Non Iteratur In Facto? Vercor proloqui quod sentio, vereor, inquam, ne castior fuerit harum incestus, quam pudicitia multarum. "Where, in all this transaction, can the crime of lust or of incest be proved? How can this be proved to be a vice when the fact was never repeated? I am afraid to speak my whole mind on the subject, lest the incest of these should appear more laudable than the chastity of multitudes." There is a distinction made here by Origen which is worthy of notice; a single bad act, though a sin, does not necessarily argue a vicious heart, as in order to be vicious a man must be habituated to sinful acts.

The generation which proceeded from this incestuous connection, whatever may be said in extenuation of the transaction, (its peculiar circumstances being considered), was certainly a bad one. The Moabites soon fell from the faith of God, and became idolaters, the people of Chemosh, and of Baal-peor, Num 21:29; Num 25:1-3; and were enemies to the children of Abraham. See Numbers 22; Jdg 3:14, etc. And the Ammonites, who dwelt near to the Moabites, united with them in idolatry, and were also enemies to Israel. See Jdg 11:4, Jdg 11:24; Deu 23:3, Deu 23:4. As both these people made afterwards a considerable figure in the sacred history, the impartial inspired writer takes care to introduce at this early period an account of their origin. See what has been said on the case of Noah's drunkenness, Gen 9:20, etc.

This is an awful history, and the circumstances detailed in it are as distressing to piety as to humanity. It may, however, be profitable to review the particulars.

1. From the commencement of the chapter we find that the example and precepts of Abraham had not been lost on his nephew Lot. He also, like his uncle, watches for opportunities to call in the weary traveler. This Abraham had taught his household, and we see the effect of his blessed teaching. Lot was both hospitable and pious, though living in the midst of a crooked and perverse race. It must be granted that from several circumstances in his history he appears to have been a weak man, but his weakness was such as was not inconsistent with general uprightness and sincerity. He and his family were not forgetful to entertain strangers, and they alone were free from the pollutions of this accursed people. How powerful are the effects of a religious education, enforced by pious example! It is one of God's especial means of grace. Let a man only do justice to his family, by bringing them up in the fear of God, and he will crown it with his blessing. How many excuse the profligacy of their family, which is often entirely owing to their own neglect, by saying, "O, we cannot give them grace!" No, you cannot; but you can afford them the means of grace. This is your work, that is the Lord's. If, through your neglect of precept and example, they perish, what an awful account must you give to the Judge of quick and dead! It was the sentiment of a great man, that should the worst of times arrive, and magistracy and ministry were both to fall, yet, if parents would but be faithful to their trust, pure religion would be handed down to posterity, both in its form and in its power.

2. We have already heard of the wickedness of the inhabitants of the cities of the plain, the cup of their iniquity was full; their sin was of no common magnitude, and what a terrible judgment fell upon them! Brimstone and fire are rained down from heaven upon these traders in iniquity; and what a correspondence between the crime and the punishment? They burned in lust towards each other, and God burned them up with fire and brimstone. Their sin was unnatural, and God punished it by supernatural means. Divine justice not only observes a proportion between the crime and the degree of punishment, but also between the species of crime and the kind of punishment inflicted.

3. Disobedience to the command of God must ever meet with severe reprehension, especially in those who have already partaken of his grace, because these know his salvation, and are justly supposed to possess, by his grace, the power of resisting all solicitations to sin. The servant who knew his lord's will and did it not, was to be beaten with many stripes; see Luk 12:47. Lot's wife stands as an everlasting monument of admonition and caution to all backsliders. She ran well, she permitted Satan to hinder, and she died in her provocation! While we lament her fate, we should profit by her example. To begin in the good way is well; to continue in the path is better; and to persevere unto the end, best of all. The exhortation of our blessed Lord on this subject should awaken our caution, and strongly excite our diligence: Remember Lot's wife! On the conduct of Lot and his daughters, See note on Gen 19:31.