

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 19

The contents of this chapter are Lot's entertainment of two angels that came to Sodom, (^{<01901>}Genesis 19:1-3); the rude behaviour of the men of Sodom towards them, who for it were smote with blindness, (^{<01904>}Genesis 19:4-11); the deliverance of Lot, his wife and two daughters, by means of the angels he entertained, (^{<01912>}Genesis 19:12-17); the sparing of the city of Zoar at the entreaty of Lot, to which he was allowed to flee, (^{<01918>}Genesis 19:18-22); the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, (^{<01923>}Genesis 19:23-25); Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt for looking back, (^{<01926>}Genesis 19:26); Abraham's view of the conflagration of the cities, (^{<01928>}Genesis 19:28,29); Lot's betaking himself to a mountain, and dwelling in a cave with his two daughters, by whom he had two sons, the one called Moab, and the other Benammi, (^{<01930>}Genesis 19:30-38).

Ver. 1. *And there came two angels to Sodom at even*, etc.] Or “the two angels”^{f1135}, the two men who were angels in the likeness of men, that had been with Abraham in the heat of the day at Hebron, on the evening of the same day came to Sodom:

and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: not as a civil magistrate to try causes there, being appointed a judge over them, as Jarchi relates; yea, the Jews say^{f1136}: that that day five judges were appointed by the men of Sodom, and Lot was the chief of them; but this is not likely, and seems to be contradicted, (^{<01909>}Genesis 19:9); but he sat there to observe strangers that might pass by, and invite them into his house, and that they might not fall into the hands of the wicked Sodomites, who might abuse them; this being a time when not only travellers would be glad to put up and take refreshment, but his wicked neighbours lay in wait for them to satisfy their lusts on them: he had learnt this hospitality from Abraham;

and Lot seeing [them], rose up to meet them: he arose from his seat and went forward to meet them, which showed his readiness and heartiness to receive them:

and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; not in a religious way, as paying worship to angels, for as yet he did not know them to be such, and if he had, would not have given them divine adoration; but in a civil way, as was the custom of the eastern countries to bow very low in their civil respects to men, especially to great personages; and such Lot took these to be by their goodly looks and by their dress, as appears by his salutation of them in (^{Q18P}Genesis 19:2).

Ver. 2. *And he said, behold now, my lords*, etc.] Taking them to be, and bespeaking them as persons of quality, who appeared with majesty in their countenances, and looked as if they had been well brought up, and were upon their travels; not knowing them to be angels, whom he received and entertained unawares, as the apostle, referring to Lot and Abraham, observes, (^{S18P}Hebrews 13:2);

turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house; meaning himself, who was their humble servant, and entreats them to turn in to his house, which perhaps was hard by, and take up their lodging with him: the ancient Jews ^{f1137} give the sense of the phrase thus, go a roundabout, winding, crooked way to my house, that the men of Sodom may not see you go in there, and know you are there. This is taken from the signification of the word to “turn in”, which in a different construction signifies to decline, to go back; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

“turn here, and there, and go into the house of your servant.”

and tarry all night, and wash your feet; the meaning is, that they would stay all night, and take up their lodging with him, when they had washed their feet, which was usually done before they laid down, and even before they supped; and indeed was the first thing that was done to a stranger upon his entering into the house, (^{Q18P}Genesis 18:4 ^{Q174}Luke 7:44):

and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways: signifying that he would not detain them longer than they thought fit; they might rise as soon in the morning as they pleased, and pursue their journey, only he entreats they would accept of a night's lodging with him:

and they said, nay, but we will abide in the street all night; which they said partly out of modesty, it not becoming strangers to be too forward in accepting an invitation, and partly to try whether Lot was hearty in the invitation he gave them; and hereby also reigning ignorance of the manners and behaviour of the men of Sodom, as if they might be safe from their

insults in the street in the night; and this made Lot the more pressing upon them, that they might not be exposed to his wicked neighbours.

Ver. 3. *And he pressed them greatly*, etc.] He prayed, he entreated, he persuaded, he made use of a multitude of words, and of all the arguments he could think of, to prevail upon them; and might not only press them with words, but make use of gestures, as taking them by the hand, or by their clothes, and as it were forcing them into his house, whereby it plainly appeared he was cordial and hearty in his invitation:

and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house: went along with him to it, and instead of proceeding forward, or continuing where they were, or steering their course to a street in the city, they turned in to Lot's house:

and he made them a feast: a large, liberal, and generous entertainment, as Abraham did, consisting of a variety of eatables and drinkables; indeed it has its name only from drinking, wine being a principal part of a banquet:

and did bake unleavened bread; not because it was the time of the passover, as Jarchi suggests, for as yet that was not instituted; but for quicker dispatch, that his guests might have their supper the sooner, and get to bed the earlier, and rest themselves; bread without leaven in it being sooner baked than that which is made with it:

and they did eat; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem are,

“they seemed as if they ate.”

(See Gill on “~~0188~~Genesis 18:8”);

Ver. 4. *But before they lay down*, etc.] Upon their beds to sleep; it was between supper time and bedtime that the following affair happened, while the angels were talking to Lot about the men of Sodom, and inquiring what sort of men they were, as the Jewish writers^{f1138} suggest:

the men of the city, [even] the men of Sodom, compassed the house round about; the house of Lot, where the angels were:

both old and young: the males of the city of every age; some that were past committing the sin they were so infamous for, as well as those that burned with that unnatural lust; some that could not be actors were willing to be

spectators; and all were curious to see the lovely persons, that it was reported all over the city were seen to go into Lot's house:

all the people from every quarter; all from one end of the city to the other, and from every corner in it: which shows the general corruption and depravity of the city, that it was so far from having ten righteous persons in it, that of the proper inhabitants of it, there was not, as Jarchi notes, one righteous person, no, not one.

Ver. 5. *And they called unto Lot*, etc.] With a loud voice, that he might hear, they being in the street, and he within doors; and perhaps there might be a court before his house, through which there was a passage up to it, as seems from (^{Q19B}Genesis 19:6):

and said unto him, where are the men which came in to thee this night? for though they were angels, they appeared like men, and they seemed to be so to them who saw them go into Lot's house:

bring them out unto us, that we may know them; not who they were, and from whence they came, and what their business was; nor did they pretend anything of this kind to hide and cover their design from Lot, but they were open and impudent, and declared their sin without shame and blushing, which is their character, (^{Q39D}Isaiah 3:9); their meaning was, that they might commit that unnatural sin with them, they were addicted to, and in common used, and which from them to this day bears the name of Sodomy. As lawful copulation with a man's wife is modestly expressed by knowing her, (^{Q10D}Genesis 4:1,17,25); so this unlawful and shocking copulation of man with man is expressed by this phrase; and that this was their meaning is plain from Lot's answer to them, (^{Q19B}Genesis 19:8).

Ver. 6. *And Lot went out at the door unto them*, etc.] At the door of his house:

and shut the door after him; the door of the passage to his house, the courtyard door, for another word is here used; unless the one was properly the door, and the other a hatch: however, this precaution of shutting it was used to prevent the men of Sodom rushing in, and taking away the men by violence; and that Lot might have some opportunity of trying what he could do by arguments, to prevail upon them to desist from their attempt.

Ver. 7. *And said, I pray you, brethren*, etc.] Not by family or nation, for the Sodomites were of the race of Ham, in the line of Canaan, and Lot was

a descendant of Shem, in the line of Arphaxad; nor by religion, for the one were idolaters, and the other a worshipper of the true God, but by community of nature; and especially he called them so by reason of their having been neighbours considerable time, and on the score of friendship, (see ^{<1193>}1 Kings 9:13); and with this soft and loving language Lot hoped to win his neighbours, and to persuade them from pursuing their unlawful measures: for which purpose and that alone he used it, saying to them,

do not so wickedly; as to use ill a man's guests, to abuse strangers, to break the laws and rules of hospitality, and especially to commit that unnatural sin they were bent upon.

Ver. 8. *Behold now, I have two daughters, which have not known man,* etc.] Though some think they were espoused to men, but had not yet cohabited with them, (see ^{<1194>}Genesis 19:14):

let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as [is] good in your eyes; this was a very great evil in Lot to make such an offer of his daughters; it was contrary to parental love and affection, an exposing the chastity of his daughters, which should have been his care to preserve; nor had he a power to dispose of them in such a manner: and though fornication is a lesser evil than sodomy, yet all evil is to be avoided, and even it is not to be done that good may come: nothing can be said to excuse this good man, but the hurry of spirit, and confusion of mind that he was in, not knowing what to say or do to prevent the base designs of those men; that he might be pretty certain they would not accept of his offer, their lust burning more after men than women; that this showed his great regard to the laws of hospitality, that he had rather sacrifice his daughters to their brutal lusts, than give up the men that were in his house to them; and that he might hope that this would soften their minds, and put them off of any further attempt; but after all it must be condemned as a dangerous and imprudent action:

only unto these men do nothing; for as yet he knew them not to be angels; had he, it would not have given him the concern it did, since he must have known that they were able to defend themselves, and that the sin these men offered to commit could not be perpetrated on them: but he took them for mere men, and his request is, that no injury might be done to their persons in any respect, and especially in that way which their wicked hearts put them upon, and is so shocking to nature:

for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof; for though it was not their intention in coming, nor the design of Providence in bringing them into Lot's house, to secure them from the violence of the men of Sodom, but for the preservation of Lot and his family, which as yet he knew nothing of, yet it was what Lot had in view in giving the invitation to them: and the laws of hospitality being reckoned sacred and inviolable, a man's house was accounted an asylum for strangers when taken into it.

Ver. 9. *And they said, stand back*, etc.] Turn on one side, get away from the door, that we may come to it:

and they said [again]: to one another:

this one [fellow] came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge; this one man, and he a stranger and sojourner, no freeman or citizen of this city, sets himself against the whole body of the inhabitants, and takes upon him to judge what is right and wrong to be done; and if he is let alone in "judging he will judge"^{f1139}, as it may be rendered; he will take upon him this office, and continue to exercise it, and determine and decide all matters among us at his pleasure. This confutes the above notion of the Jews, that Lot was appointed a judge by the men of Sodom, yea, the president of the court for that day; (see Gill on "~~GEN~~Genesis 19:1"):

now will we deal worse with thee than with them: the men in his house, both by abusing his body in their unnatural way, and by beating and bruising him, and pulling him in pieces, limb from limb; something of this kind they seem to threaten him with, and attempted to effect, as follows:

and they pressed sore upon the man, [even] Lot; not only with words in a bullying way, with menaces and threats, with oaths, and curses, and imprecations; for it is the same word that is used of Lot, pressing the angels with words and arguments to come into his house, (~~GEN~~Genesis 19:3); but they rushed in upon him in a body, and pushed him away, and pulled him about, and would in all probability have torn him to pieces, had he not been rescued by the angels:

and came near to break the door: that which was shut, the door of the passage that led to the house.

Ver. 10. *But the men put forth their hand*, etc.] They came to the door, and opened it, and put out their hands, one on one side the door, and the other on the other:

and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door; and thus they rescued Lot from the fury and rage of the men of Sodom, and prevented his daughters being exposed unto them, as he had offered. This action showed them to be more than men, that they should open the door, take in Lot, and shut it so suddenly, that the men of Sodom could take no advantage of it, could neither retain Lot, nor enter the door when opened, and especially what follows.

Ver. 11. *And they smote the men that [were] at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great*, etc.] with “blindnesses”^{f1140}; with extreme blindness, with blindness both of eye and heart, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and indeed had they not been given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, such a stroke upon them might have convinced them that their ways were evil, and their works not right, and that by them they had incurred the displeasure of God, and would desisted from their enterprise; but, on the contrary, they went on with it, and sought with all diligence and labour as much as possible to effect it. The word for “blindness” is only used here and in (~~2~~ 2 Kings 6:18), and denotes a peculiar sort of blindness; not an entire blindness with respect to every object, but only with regard to that they were intent upon; for otherwise they would not have continued about Lot’s house, or fatigued themselves with searching for the door of it, but would rather have been glad to have groped to their own houses as well as they could: and thus it was with the Syrians, when they were smitten at the prayer of Elisha, it was not total, for they could follow the prophet in the way he went and led them, but they could not see their way to the place where they intended to go; and so these men of Sodom could see other objects, but not the door of Lot’s house, their heads were so confused, and their imaginations so disturbed as in drunken men; or the medium of the visive faculty, the air, so altered, or the form of the object to be seen so changed, that they could not discern it; when they saw the door, it looked like the wall, and that which seemed to them to be the door, proved to be the wall:

so that they wearied themselves to find the door; went backwards and forwards, fancying the door was here, and then it was there, and when they came to it, they perceived it was not; and thus they went to and fro, until they were quite weary of seeking it, and despaired of finding it, and left off.

Ver. 12. *And the men said unto Lot*, etc.] When they had got him into the house again, they began to make themselves known unto him, and to acquaint him with the business they came to do:

hast thou here any besides? which they ask not as being ignorant, though angels know not everything relative to men, but to show their great regard to Lot, who had been so kind to them, and so careful of them; that for his sake they would save them all, if they would take the benefit of their protection, and in this they doubtless had the mind of God revealed to them:

son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters; it should be rendered either “son-in-law, or thy sons, or thy daughters”^{f1141}; if thou hast any son-in-law that has married a daughter of thine, or any sons of thine own that live from thee; or grandsons, the sons of thy married daughters, as Jarchi interprets it; or any other daughters besides those two we here see:

and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring [them] out of this place; that is, whatsoever relations he had, whether more near or remote; for as for his goods, whether in his own house, or in any other part of the city, there was no time for saving them.

Ver. 13. *For we will destroy this place*, etc.] Or “we are destroying it”^{f1142}, are about to do it, and will quickly and immediately do it:

because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; the cry of the sins of the inhabitants of it, which were many, and openly, and daringly committed, and reached to heaven, and called for immediate vengeance and punishment:

and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it; by which they discovered themselves to be angels, and what their business was, to destroy Sodom; and which confutes the notion of the Jews, that they were sent on different errands; whereas it is clear from hence, these two were sent to do one and the same thing; (see Gill on “^{<0182>}Genesis 18:2”).

Ver. 14. *And Lot went out*, etc.] From his house, after the men of Sodom were gone from it, and before the morning, very probably about midnight:

and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters: according to Aben Ezra, he had two other daughters that perished in Sodom, which he gathers from (^{<0195>}Genesis 19:15), “which are here”, as if he had some

elsewhere; and so Jarchi says, he had two daughters married in the city. And the Jewish writers ^{f1143} speak of one of them, whose name was Pelothith, married to one of the grandees of Sodom: but it seems rather, that these were the daughters Lot had at home with him; who, according to Josephus ^{f1144} were espoused to men in the city, but not yet married; and on account of such espousals, as were usual in the eastern countries, Lot calls them his sons-in-law, as they were intended, and so the words may be rendered, “that were about to take his daughters” ^{f1145}; to take them for wives, and to their own houses, neither of which they had as yet done; for if these had been daughters of his married, and taken home, he would not only have spoke unto their husbands, but to them also; and would have been still more pressing upon them to arise and make their escape; of which nothing is said, nor of any answer of theirs to him, only of his sons-in-law, as they are called on the above account:

and said, up, get ye out of this place; that is, get up from your beds, anne immediately, and make your escape out of the city:

for the Lord will destroy this city; now, directly, immediately; therefore there is no time to be lost, but at once prepare for your safety:

but he seemed as one that mocked to his sons in law; as one that was in jest, and had a mind to have a little sport with them, to get them out of their beds, and put them into a flight, and then laugh at them.

Ver. 15. *And when the morning arose*, etc.] When it was break of day, for as yet the sun was not risen, nor did it rise until Lot got to Zoar, (⁽¹¹²³⁾Genesis 19:23). He was now returned from his sons-in-law, and by this time it began to be light:

then the angels hastened Lot; urged him to get out of his house as fast as he could:

saying, arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; from whence Aben Ezra, and others, have concluded, as has been observed, that he had other daughters elsewhere, which they suppose were married to men of Sodom; but the phrase, “which are here”, or “are found”, or “are present” ^{f1146}, relates to his wife, as well as his daughters, and only signifies, that he should take all his relations that were present; and these may be only opposed to and distinguished from his sons-in-law that were absent, and refused to hearken to his advice and exhortations. Onkelos paraphrases the words, “who are found faithful with thee”; who believed what the

angels said concerning the destruction of Sodom, as well as he, as did his wife and two daughters:

lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city; in the punishment inflicted on the city for their iniquity. (see ^{668B}Revelation 18:4).

Ver. 16. *And while he lingered*, etc.] Delayed going out of his house, either loath to leave his goods and substance behind him; or waiting to see whether his sons-in-law would come to him; or, as others, praying that God would spare the city: though rather the sense is, that he was so amazed, and filled with horror and trembling at the thought of what judgments were coming on the city, that he was like one stupid, that had no power to stir nor move, which seems best to agree with the sense of the word used ^{f1147}:

the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; one of them took hold of his hand with one of his hands, and on his wife's with the other, and the second took hold of one of his daughters with one hand, and of the other with his other hand, and so led them out:

the Lord being merciful unto him; and so saved them from the ruin and destruction of the city, in which had they stayed a little longer they would have been involved. It was not owing to their merits, but to the mercy of God that they were spared:

and they brought him forth, and set him without the city; not him only, but his wife and two daughters also, and having so done, left them and returned to the city; for so the last clause may be rendered, "and left him without the city" ^{f1148}, to shift for themselves; or rather well knowing that there would be one that would immediately appear and take them under his care and protection, as the event shows.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad*, etc.] Into the fields of Sodom, or the suburbs of it:

that he said, escape for thy life; not one of the two men or angels that had been with him all the night past, for they had now left him, and were gone back to the city: but Jehovah the Son of God, who had been communing with Abraham, and now came to Sodom, and appeared to Lot, just at the time the two angels left him, and bid him escape with all haste, if he had any regard for his life, and that of those with him:

look not behind thee; as showing any concern for his goods and substance he had left behind him, or for his sons-in-law, who refused to come with him, and much less for the wicked inhabitants of the city; and this command was not given to Lot only, but to his wife and daughters, as appears by the sequel:

neither stay thou in all the plain: in the plain of Jordan, for the whole plain, and the cities in it, were to be destroyed:

escape to the mountain, lest thou be destroyed, lest thou be consumed; the same mountain the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and they that were with them after the battle of the kings, fled to, (^{Q1140}Genesis 14:10); here only he and his could be safe from the conflagration of the plain.

Ver. 18. *And Lot said unto them*, etc.] Supposing three present, not observing that the two angels had left him that had brought him thither; though it is but to one of them he addresses himself, even to him who had bid him make the best of his way to the mountain, as appears by what follows:

oh, not so, my Lord; that is, let me not be obliged to go so far as to the mountain; though R. Samuel takes it to be an assent, and interprets the phrase of his being willing: but this does not agree with what follows, and is rejected by Aben Ezra, who relates it; and who also observes, that the word “Lord” is a common name, that is, that belongs to a creature; but Jarchi says their Rabbins take it to be an holy name, that is, a name that belongs to God, and gives a good reason why it is so to be understood here; since the person spoken to had it in his power to kill or make alive, to save or destroy, as the following words show; so Ben Melech and the Targum of Oukelos render it by Jehovah.

Ver. 19. *Behold, now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight*, etc.] In sending two of his angels to him, to inform him of the approaching destruction of Sodom; to pluck him out of it as a brand out of the burning, and to place him without the city, and in directing and encouraging him to escape for his life:

and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; he owns it was owing to the mercy of this illustrious Person, whom he knew and acknowledges, by what he says, to be a divine one, that his life was saved; and that this appeared exceeding great in it, that he should spare him and his family, when such multitudes of souls

would perish; and he might have perished with the rest, if he had not had timely notice in such a gracious manner:

and I cannot, or, “but now^{f1149}, I cannot”

escape to the mountain; it is too far for me; he signifies that his strength would not hold out through the fatigues of the night past, and want of sleep and rest; but this was owing more to the infirmity of his mind than of his body, for he could go to this same mountain afterwards:

lest some evil take me, and I die; or “that evil”^{f1150}, the burning of Sodom, and the cities of the plain, lest that should overtake him before he got to the mountain: thus he began to distrust the power of God to strengthen him to go thither, who had appeared so wonderfully for him in his present deliverance; and he might have assured himself, that he that brought him out of Sodom would never suffer him to perish in the destruction of it.

Ver. 20. *Behold now, this city [is] near to flee unto*, etc.] Pointing to Bela, afterwards called Zoar, from what follows: it is said to be two miles distant from Sodom^{f1151}. But the Jews^{f1152} say it was four miles, and some say^{f1153} five; for they reckon that a man may go five miles from the ascent of the morning (or break of day) till the sun shines out:

and it [is] a little one: a little city, and the houses and buildings in it few, the inhabitants few; and the sins of it few, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, in comparison of Sodom and Gomorrah; and therefore Lot hoped this favour would be granted him, that this city might be saved, and he be allowed to flee to it, and go no further; but others think this refers not to the city, which some say^{f1154} was a large and spacious one, but to his request, that it was a small thing he asked, and hoped therefore it would not be denied, and in which he was very importunate:

oh, let me escape thither, ([is] it not a little one?); or “is it not a little thing”^{f1155}? a small request that I make:

and my soul shall live: I shall not only be able to get thither, and so my life will be preserved; but I shall be in good spirits, rejoice and be glad, that I am got safe and out of the reach of danger; my spirits, which are now faint, and therefore can never think of getting so far as to the mountain, but, if this favour is granted me, they will revive, and I shall cheerfully pursue my journey thither, and be comfortable.

Ver. 21. *And he said unto him, see, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also,* etc.] Accepted thy prayer and granted thy request, as well as in other things; shown grace and mercy to thee: or, “have lifted up thy face” ^{f1156}; alluding to the custom of the eastern countries, where persons, when they come into the presence of their superiors, used to prostrate their faces to the ground; when, as a token of their acceptance of them, and good will to them, they used to order them to be lifted up, or them to lift up their faces, and stand before them:

that I will not overthrow this city for the which thou hast spoken; for, though he had not in express words petitioned that the city might be spared, yet he had tacitly done it, insomuch as he had requested he might flee unto it, where he could not have been safe had it been destroyed.

Ver. 22. *Haste thee, escape thither,* etc.] Seeing he had granted him his request, he is urgent upon him to be gone, and not to delay upon any account, or make other excuses:

for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither; that is, consistent with the decree of God, that Lot and his family should be delivered and preserved, and with his promise made to him, that he would not overthrow that city; and therefore the catastrophe which would befall all the cities at once could not begin until he was safely arrived there:

therefore the name of the city was called Zoar; in later times, and probably first by Lot, from his use of the word “little”, which was his request, which Zoar signifies; it before was called Bela, (see ⁻⁰¹⁴²Genesis 14:2).

Ver. 23. *And the sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.*] Which is observed partly to point at the time of his entrance into the city, and of the burning of Sodom, which began at the same time; and partly to show what a fine morning it was, and what little appearance there was of such a tempest rising as quickly did; so that the inhabitants of Sodom, who were up so early, little thought of so sudden a catastrophe, and those that were in their beds were at once surprised with it: it was a morning of light and joy to Lot, who was so wonderfully delivered, but a dreadful one to the men of Sodom and the rest of the cities of the plain, with whom the scene was soon altered; likewise from hence it appeared, that the following tempest was extraordinary, and did not proceed from natural causes.

Ver. 24. *Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.*] And not upon those two cities only, but upon Admah and Zeboiim also, (see ^{<6523>}Deuteronomy 29:23); this was not a common storm of thunder and lightning, with which often there is a smell of sulphur or brimstone; but this was a continued shower of sulphurous fire, or of burning flaming brimstone, which at once consumed those cities and the inhabitants of them; and the land adjacent being bituminous, or however some parts of it, full of slimepits, or pits of bitumen, a liquid of a pitchy quality, (^{<0140>}Genesis 14:10); this flaming sulphur falling thereon, must burn in a most fierce and furious manner; and which utterly consumed not only houses, goods, and everything upon the land, but the land itself, and turned it into a bituminous lake, called to this day, from thence, the Lake Asphaltites, the Greek word for bitumen being “asphaltos”. Of this conflagration some Heathen writers speak, as particularly Tacitus ^{f1157} who says, some large and famous cities, or, as some copies have it, Jewish ones, not far from Jordan, were struck with thunderbolts, and were fired “igni ceolesti”, with fire from heaven, and were consumed; and so Solinus ^{f1158} relates, that,

“at some distance from Jerusalem, a sorrowful lake appears, which the black ground testifies was stricken by heaven and turned into ashes; where were two towns, the one called Sodomum, the other Gomorrum.”

This was a righteous judgment on those cities, and a just retaliation for their sin; their sin was an unnatural one, and nature is inverted to punish them, fire comes down from heaven, or hell from heaven, as Salvian’s words are, to consume them; they burned with lusts one against another, and flaming sheets of sulphurous fire fall upon them, burn and destroy them; and, in allusion to this terrible conflagration, hell is called the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, (^{<6007>}Jude 1:7) (^{<6014>}Revelation 20:14,15 21:8); and this destruction was brought upon them by Jehovah the Son of God, who had appeared to Abraham in an human form, and gave him notice of it, and heard all he had to plead for those cities, and then departed from him to Sodom, and was the author of this sad catastrophe; this amazing shower of fire and brimstone was rained by him from Jehovah his Father, out of heaven; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem both call him, the Word of the Lord.

Ver. 25. *And he overthrew those cities*, etc.] Of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim: very probably at the same time that this fiery tempest was in the heavens, there was an earthquake which overthrew the cities; and so Strabo^{f1159} makes the lake, which is now the place where they stood, to be owing to earthquakes and eruptions of fire, and of hot bituminous and sulphurous waters; and says nothing of fire from heaven, which yet Tacitus and Solinus do, being unacquainted with the sacred history:

and all the plain; the plain of Jordan, and the cities on it, all but Zoar; not all the five cities, as Josephus^{f1160}: Egesippus^{f1161} and other authors mistake, only the four above mentioned. Strabo^{f1162} speaks of thirteen cities being formerly upon this spot, of which Sodom was the metropolis:

and all the inhabitants of the cities; none were spared, all were destroyed, but Lot, his wife, and two daughters:

and that which grew upon the ground; the trees, herbs, and plants; these were all turned up by the earthquake, and burnt with fire from heaven: Tacitus, in his account of this conflagration, says,

“the fields, which were formerly fruitful, and inhabited by many cities, were burnt up with lightning; and there are traces (he adds) yet remain; the earth itself looks torrid, and has lost its fruitful virtue; for whatsoever grows up of itself, or is sown and rises up in the plant or flower, or grows up to its usual species, becomes black and empty, and vanishes into ashes.”

The place where those cities stood is now a lake, and is sometimes called the salt sea, (^{OHB}Genesis 14:3); and sometimes the dead sea, because it is said, no creature can live in it; and sometimes called the Lake Asphaltites, from its bituminous and pitchy quality: though Reland^{f1163} has attempted to confute the notion that the cities of Sodom, etc. stood where this lake now is: and the many things that have been reported of this lake and parts adjacent, by various historians, supposed to be of good credit, are by modern travellers exploded^{f1164}; as those of no living creature being bred in it; of bodies not sinking in it; and of birds being unable to fly over it; and of the cities appearing under water in a clear day; and of the apples of Sodom, which look beautiful to the eye, but when touched fall into ashes; many of which Josephus^{f1165} himself relates: indeed, Ludovicus Vartomanus^{f1166}, a traveller in those parts in the beginning of the sixteenth century, says,

“there yet remain the ruins of the destroyed city, as a witness of God’s wrath; we may affirm, there are three cities, and each of them situated on the decline of three hills, and the ruins appear about the height of three or four cubits; there is yet seen, I scarce know what, something like blood, or rather like red wax mixed with earth:”

and our countryman Mr. Sandys^{f1167}, though he questions some of the above things before related, especially concerning the apples, yet says,

“not far from thence grows a tree whose fruit is like a green walnut, which he saw, and which they say never ripens.”

This lake of Sodom, according to Josephus^{f1168}, is five hundred and eighty furlongs in length unto Zoar, and one hundred fifty broad; but, according to modern accounts, it is twenty four leagues in length, and six or seven in breadth^{f1169}; the Arabic geographer^{f1170} says, it is sixty miles in length, and twelve in breadth; it is now called by the Arabs, Bahar Louth, Lot’s lake.

Ver. 26. *But his wife looked back from behind him*, etc.] That is, the wife of Lot, whose name the Jewish writers^{f1171} say was Adith, or as others Irith^{f1172}; and, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, she was a native of Sodom: now, as they were going from Sodom to Zoar, she was behind Lot, his back was to her, so that he could not see her; this was a temptation to her to look back, since her husband could not see her; and this she did, either, as the above paraphrases suggest, that she might see what would be the end of her father’s house and family, or whether her married daughters, if she had any, were following her, after whom her bowels yearned; or being grieved for the goods and substance left behind, and for the people of Sodom in general, for whom she had too much concern; however, be it on what account it may, she was severely punished for it:

and she became a pillar of salt; was struck dead at once, either by the immediate hand of God, or by the shower of fire and brimstone; and her body was at once changed into a metallic substance, a kind of salt, hard and durable, such as Pliny^{f1173} speaks of, cut out of rocks, with which houses were built, and hardened with the sun, and could scarcely be cut with an iron instrument; so that she did not fall to the ground, but stood up erect as a pillar, retaining very probably the human form, Josephus^{f1174} says, this pillar continued to his times, and that he saw it; Irenaeus^{f1175} and

Tertullian ^{f1176} speak of it as in their times, a thing incredible; and Benjamin of Tudela says ^{f1177}, it stood in his times two paras from the sea of Sodom; and though the flocks were continually licking it, yet it grew again to its former size. Rauwolff ^{f1178} relates something of the same kind by information, but not on his own testimony; that the pilgrims who visit it used to beat off some small pieces, and yet was found whole again; nay, which is beyond all credit, that they once knocked off a whole hand and took it away, and when they returned found it whole again: and one ^{f1179} that travelled in those parts in the beginning of the sixteenth century affirms, that almost in the midway to Zoar is seen to this day the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was turned; he does not say indeed that he saw it, but leaves his reader to think so; and the Jerusalem Targum says, it will remain until the resurrection; but modern travellers of credit and intelligence could never see it; and when they have inquired of the country people about it, they either tell them there is no such thing, or say it stands in the mountains, where it cannot be come at, because of the Arabs, or because of wild beasts ^{f1180}: but no doubt there was such a statue, but how long it continued cannot be said; nor should it be thought incredible, when there are similar facts affirmed by authors of the best credit and reputation: Aventinus ^{f1181} reports, that in Bavaria, in 1348, more than fifty peasants, with the cows they had milked, at the time of an earthquake were struck with a pestilential air, and stiffened into statues of salt, and which he himself saw, and the chancellor of Austria: and Bisselius relates ^{f1182}, that Didacus Almagrus, who was the first person that with his army penetrated through the cold countries from Peru into Chile, lost abundance of his men, through the extremity of the cold and a pestiferous air; and that, returning to the same place five months afterwards, he found his men, horse and foot, standing unmoved, unconsumed, in the same situation, form, and habit, the pestilence had fastened them; one lying on the ground, another standing upright, another holding his bridle in his hand, as if about to shake it; in short, he found them just as he left them, without any ill smell or colour, common to corpses: indeed, the very fables of the Heathens, which seem to be hammered out of this history, serve to confirm the truth of the whole of it: as the fable of Jupiter and Mercury coming to a certain place in Phrygia, where they were hospitably entertained by Baucis and Philemon, when the doors were shut against them by others; wherefore they directed their guests, after being entertained by them, to leave the place and follow them to the mountains, when they turned the town into a standing lake ^{f1183}: and also that of Niobe being changed into a marble stone while weeping for

the death of her children: and of Olenus and Lethaea, turned into stones also ^{f1184}. But, leaving these, and passing by other instances that might be observed, we are directed to remember this wonderful case by our Lord himself, (^{<077>}Luke 17:32); and it should be an instruction to us not to look back nor turn back from the profession of the true religion we have made, but to follow Christ, and abide by his truths and ordinances.

Ver. 27. *And Abraham got up early in the morning*, etc.] Perhaps he had had but little sleep the whole night, his thoughts being taken up with what was to befall the cities of the plain; and especially being in great concern for Lot and his family:

to the place where he stood before the Lord; (^{<0182>}Genesis 18:22); to the very spot of ground where he had stood the day before in the presence of the Lord, and had conversed with him, and prayed unto him; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

“to the place where he ministered in prayer before the Lord;”

here he came and stood waiting for an answer to his prayers; and perhaps this place was an eminence, from whence he could have a view of the plain of Jordan and the cities on it; and so it appears from (^{<0192>}Genesis 19:28).

Ver. 28. *And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain*, etc.] To see how it fared with them: very probably the Lord had hinted it to him, that the destruction would be that morning, and therefore he rose early, got to the place bearily, and being on an eminence, looked wistly to see if he could observe any sign of it:

and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace; after the fiery shower was over, and the cities burnt down, the smoke ascended toward heaven, as the smoke of mystical Babylon will do, (^{<0603>}Revelation 19:3); like the reek of a boiling cauldron; or, as Jarchi, like the smoke of a lime kiln always burning.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain*, etc.] Not when he had destroyed them, but when he was about to destroy them; for Lot was sent out from them, and delivered out of them, before they were destroyed; and therefore Noldius rightly renders the words, “before God destroyed” ^{f1185} them:

that God remembered Abraham; his promise to him, that he would bless them that blessed him, (^{-0113B}Genesis 12:3); and his prayer to him for Lot in (⁻⁰¹⁸²³Genesis 18:23-32); for, though he does not mention him by name, he bore him on his heart, and he was always in the number of the righteous ones, on whose account he interceded for the sparing of the cities; and, though God did not hear and answer him with regard to the cities, yet he did with respect to the righteous men in them:

and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow; by two angels, who took him by the hand and brought him out of Sodom, now overthrown:

when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt; that is, in one of which Lot dwelt, namely, Sodom, as Aben Ezra rightly observes, comparing the passage with (⁻⁰⁷¹³⁷Judges 12:7); unless it can be thought that Lot first dwelt in one of those cities and then in another, and first and last in them all, which is not very likely.

Ver. 30. *And Lot went up out of Zoar*, etc.] Which lay in the plain, and therefore when he went from thence to the mountain, it was by an ascent:

and dwelt in the mountain; which the Lord had directed him to go to before, but was unwilling, and chose Zoar, and desired he might flee thither, and that that might be spared; but now he likes God's advice for him better than his own, and therefore betook himself to the mountain, where he might think himself safest, and where he continued; very probably this was the mountain Engaddi, under which Zoar is said to lie by Adrichomius ^{f1186}:

and his two daughters with him: his wife was turned into a pillar of salt, and these two were all of his family that with him were saved from the destruction; and these are the rather mentioned for the sake of an anecdote hereafter related:

for he feared to dwell in Zoar; it being near to Sodom; and the smoke of that city and the rest might not only be terrible but troublesome to him, and the tremor of the earth might continue and reach as far as Zoar; and perceiving the waters to rise and overflow the plain, which formed the lake where the cities stood, he might fear they would reach to Zoar and swallow up that; and especially his fears were increased, when he found the inhabitants were as wicked as those of the other cities, and were unreformed by the judgment on them; and so he might fear that a like shower of fire would descend on them and destroy them, as it had the rest,

though it had been spared for a while at his intercession; and, according to the Jewish writers^{f1187}, it remained but one year after Sodom:

and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters; which was in the mountain, the mountain of Engedi. Josephus^{f1188} makes mention of the mountains of Engedi; and here was a cave, where David with six hundred men were, in the sides of it, when Saul went into it, (~~1~~1 Samuel 24:1,3); and perhaps may be the same cave where Lot and his two daughters lived.

Ver. 31. *And the firstborn said unto the younger*, etc.] That is, the firstborn of those two, or the elder of them; for, if Lot had other daughters that were married in Sodom, it is probable they were elder than either of these: Aben Ezra intimates, that Lot had another wife, who died first, and these were by his second; the following motion is made by the eldest of them to the youngest, as being bolder, having more authority, and a greater influence to persuade:

our father [is] old; if he was fifty years of age when he was taken captive by the kings, as says the Jewish chronologer^{f1189} he must now be sixty five, since the destruction of Sodom, according to Bishop Usher^{f1190}, was fifteen years after that:

and [there] is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth; to marry them, cohabit with them, and procreate children of them, which was the common way of the propagation of mankind in the earth; they thought the whole world was destroyed by fire, as it had been by a flood; they understood it would be no more consumed by water, but they had been told it would be by fire, and they imagined the time was now come, and this was the case; that not only Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire, and that by this time the fire had reached to Zoar, and had consumed that, but that the whole earth was destroyed, and not a man left but their father, and therefore thought it could be excusable in them, and lawful for them to take the following method to repopulate the world; or else they supposed there were none in the land, the land of Canaan, not of any of their kindred and relations, for they might be ignorant of Abraham and his family, or however of any good man that they knew of, that they could be joined to in marriage; for as for the inhabitants of Zoar, they had just left, they were as wicked as any, and therefore could not think of living with them in such a near relation: but all this is not a sufficient excuse for contriving and executing what is after related; for they should have inquired of their father, who could have informed them better.

Ver. 32. *Come, let us make our father drink wine,* etc.] Meaning to excess, so as to be inebriated with it, and not know what he did: this wine might be brought with them from Sodom, with other provisions for their refreshment and support; or it may be rather from Zoar, where they furnished themselves with a quantity for their support in the mountain they betook themselves unto:

and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the seed of our father; have children by him, and propagate and preserve the human species; this they might think lawful, such incestuous copulations being usual among their neighbours the Arabs, as appears from Strabo^{f1191} and other writers, and especially when there seemed to them to be a necessity for it; and it may be this did not arise from a spirit of uncleanness, or a brutish lust prevailing in them, having been religiously educated, and having preserved their chastity among such an impure generation as the men of Sodom: wherefore this might rather arise, as Bishop Patrick and others have thought, from an eager desire after the Messiah, they might hope would spring from them; their father being a descendant of Shem, a son of Abraham's elder brother, and now remarkably saved from Sodom, which they might conclude was for this purpose; and they knew of no way in which it could be brought about but in this they proposed; and the rather this may be thought to be their view, as the above learned commentator observes, when we remark their former chaste life in Sodom; their joining together in this contrivance, which, had it been a lustful business, they would have been ashamed to have communicated their thoughts of it to one another; and their imposition of names on their children to perpetuate the memory of this fact, which they rather gloried in, than were ashamed of: to which may be added, that the ancient Jewish writers^{f1192} interpret this of the Messiah; and they observe,

“it is not said a son, but seed, that seed, which is he that comes from another place: and what is this? this is the King Messiah:”

and Ruth, the Moabitess, who was of the race of the eldest daughter of Lot, stands in the genealogy of our Lord, (~~ROM~~ Matthew 1:5): however, let the intention be ever so good, it will, not justify an action so monstrously vile.

Ver. 33. *And they made their father drink wine that night,* etc.] They persuaded him to drink liberally, urged him to it again, in order to make him drunk, and so complete their design; and Lot might be the more

prevailed upon to drink freely, in order to remove his sorrow, and refresh his spirits under the loss of his wife, and his daughters, if he had any married in Sodom, as some suppose, and his sons-in-law, and of all his goods and substance; though this will not excuse his drinking to excess, nor can ignorance of the strength of wine be pleaded, since he must needs know it as well as his daughters, who, it is plain, did, and therefore plied him with it:

and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; went to his bed, and lay down by him, which she would not have dared to have done, but that she knew he was drunk and insensible:

and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose: never heard her come to bed nor get up, so dead drunk and fast asleep was he; but finding a woman in bed with him, lay with her, taking her to be his wife, forgetting, through the force of liquor, that she was dead. There is an extraordinary prick on the Vau in Kumah, rendered “she arose”, which the Jews say ^{f1193} is to show that he knew her not when she lay down, but when she arose he knew her; and indeed it may be rendered, but in her rising up.

Ver. 34. *And it came to pass on the morrow*, etc.] The day following the night, in which the above was transacted:

that the firstborn said to the younger, behold, I lay yesternight with my father; informed her, that what they had contrived succeeded according to their wish, and therefore, for her encouragement to go on, proposes to take the same method again:

let us make him drink wine this night also, and go thou in [and] lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father; may have children by him, and so our family be kept up, from whence it may be hoped the Messiah will spring, (see Gill on “⁰¹⁹²Genesis 19:32”).

Ver. 35. *And they made their father drink wine that night also*, etc.] Until he was drunk; which is an aggravation of his sin, that he should be overtaken a second time, and that so soon as the next night, when he ought to have been upon his guard, knowing how he had fallen into it the night before:

and the younger arose and lay with him; arose from her own bed, and went to her father’s, and lay down by him:

and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose; (see Gill on “~~0193~~Genesis 19:33”).

Ver. 36. *Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.*] We learn from hence what the best of men are when left to themselves; a good man, a righteous Lot, is guilty of crimes the most shocking; he exposed the chastity of his daughters to the men of Sodom, and now his daughters attacked him, and succeeded, being both with child by him; and this brought about by excessive drinking, a sin which often leads on to the foulest crimes, and therefore to be carefully avoided; these sins Lot fell into when as it were alone, on a mountain, in a cave, none but his family with him, and these only his two daughters; he that had stood his ground in the midst of Sodom, notwithstanding all the excesses of that place, the impurities in it, and the temptations that every day offered, now falls when seemingly out of the way of all: these sins and failings of good men are recorded for our admonition and caution, that we may shun all appearance of evil, and be careful lest we fall, and neither be presumptuous nor self-confident, (see ~~6102~~1 Corinthians 10:12).

Ver. 37. *And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab,* etc.] As if it was “Meab”, from the father, as Aben Ezra, and so Josephus, that is, which she had by her father; and she was so far from being ashamed that it might be known in time to come, she gave him this name. Hillerus ^{f1194} makes it to be a compound of **ba** and **abwm**, and to signify “going into”, or “lying with a father”, which still more notoriously points to her own action. Drusius has another derivation of the word, at least proposes it, and renders it “aqua patris”; “mo” in the Egyptian language signifying “water”, which is sometimes used for seed, (see ~~2341~~Isaiah 48:1):

the same [is] the father of the Moabites unto this day; a people that lived on the borders of the land of Canaan, often troublesome to the Israelites, and frequently spoken of in the Old Testament.

Ver. 38. *And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi,* etc.] That is, “the son of my people”, being the son of her father; which though it does not so manifestly appear in this name, as in the other, yet there is some trace of it; and she would have it be known by this, that he was not the son of a stranger, but of a relation of her own: some attribute this to her being more modest than her elder sister; but it looks as

if neither of them were sensible of any crime they had been guilty of, but rather thought it a commendable action, at least that it was excusable:

the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day; a people that lived near their brethren the Moabites, and were both enemies to the people of God; they quickly falling into idolatry, and whose names we often meet with in the sacred writings; and of these two sons, Josephus says ^{f1195}, the one begat the Moabites, being still a great nation, and the other the Ammonites, and both inhabit Coelesyria; they are both called the children of Lot, (~~1937B~~ Psalm 83:8). After this we hear no more of Lot in this history; and it is remarkable, that there never was, as we know of, any town or city that had in it any, trace of his name; but we are not from hence to conclude that he was a wicked man, whose memory perished with him; for mention is made of him in the New Testament, where he has a very honourable character, and is called “just Lot”, (~~6107E~~ 2 Peter 2:7).