

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LOT'S ESCAPE FROM SODOM.

SEPTEMBER 5.

GENESIS XIX : 12-26.

THE RIVER JORDAN empties itself into the DEAD SEA—40 miles long and from 9 to 10 miles wide. Its surface is the lowest of any part of the known world, being 1300 feet below the Mediterranean. It has no outlet. Its waters are intensely salt. The southern end, about 13 feet deep, is supposed to have been a part of the plain upon which the doomed cities stood in Lot's time. The district abounds with bitumen, sulphur, nitre, and other combustible materials, as well as incrustations of salt. Hills and "pillars" of salt have been discovered, notably one near to Usdum, 40 feet high, which tradition declares to be Lot's wife. V. 12. *The men said unto Lot*—two of the "angels" who appeared to Abraham in ch. 18 : 2, 16, and whom Lot met at the gate of Sodom, v. 1. The interest manifested in Lot's preservation, shews that he was, on the whole, a "righteous man," see 2 Peter 2 : 7, 8. *Hast thou here any besides?* even his bad relations had, for his sake, an offer of deliverance which they spurned. *Bring them out*—see 2 Cor. 6 : 14 17. V. 14. *Lot went*—believing that the judgment was coming. *Up, get you out*—Though it be midnight, now or never they must make their escape. *As one that mocked*—human nature is the same still—the near the judgment, the greater the security of the sinner. Matt. 24 : 37-39. Vs. 15-17. *Thy wife and thy two daughters which are here*—perhaps he had other daughters, not here, who despised the warning and perished. *While he lingered*—thinking about his friends, and the loss of his property—he was "scarcely" saved. Think of hesitation in such a supreme crisis! see 1 Pet. 4 : 17, 18. *The Lord being merciful*—see Sam. 3 : 22. Romans 11 : 22. *Escape for thy life*—every thing must be sacrificed when the welfare of the soul is in danger, Matt. 16 : 25-26. V. 18. *Not so*—groundless fear and unbelief still linger in his mind, and yet, to this same mountain he was glad to go ere long, v. 30. V. 24. *The Lord rained*—a literal shower of burning brimstone, accompanied probably with a volcanic shock which buried Sodom and Gomorrah, in the bottom of the salt sea. V. 26. *Lot's wife looked back*—in violation of the command of the angel, v. 17. *From behind him*—Her heart yearned for Sodom. She betrayed indecision and worldliness. *Became a pillar of salt*—having been killed by the sulphureous vapours her body became encrusted with salt. She was "almost saved," but, lost after all! a warning to all who halt between two opinions, see 1 Kings 18 : 21.

LEARN. In the midst of God's judgments against sinners, we behold mercy towards his saints, v. 12. Those who look back, regretting the pleasures of the world, will lose the favour of God, Heb. 10 : 38. There is no safety in the Sodom of sin. We are to look to Jesus as our only hope of salvation, Isa. 45, 22. Heb. 12 : 2.

TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH.

SEPTEMBER 12. B. C. 1872. GEN. XXII : 1-14.

AFTER the destruction of Sodom, Abraham removed to Gerar, 20 miles south of Hebron. In remembrance of the covenant with Abimelech, he called the place *Bersheba*—well of the oath. Some 26 years after the occurrences in last lesson, the great crisis in Abraham's life took place which is now described so touchingly as to need little comment. V. 1. *God did tempt*—not in the sense of inciting him to sin. This God never does, Jas 1 : 13, but tested or proved his faith in order to its development, 1 Pet. 1 : 7. *Here am I*—ready at a moment's notice for God's service. V. 2. *Thy son—thine only son*—the only son of Sarah; and the only hope of his house; his beloved son. *Moriah*—the mount on which the temple of Jerusalem was afterwards built. *Offer him for a burnt-offering*—must Isaac die by his father's own hand? How utterly destructive of all his hopes to comply with this strange and unnatural command! V. 3. *Rose up early*—without hesitation he deliberately makes every necessary preparation. The servants are ordered to saddle the ass, and get ready the "kindling wood." Isaac, little dreaming of the part he was to take in the transaction, is told that he is to go too. V. 4, the scene is too sacred to be witnessed by the servants. Their presence would embarrass him; they must remain at the foot of the hill. V. 5. *I and the lad will go...and come again*—Oh the triumph of faith Abraham had unbounded confidence that his son, though sacrificed, would in some mysterious manner be restored to him, Heb. 11 : 19. V. 6. *Laid it upon his son*—Isaac was probably 25 years of age, old enough, at least, to carry the heavy load of wood required for sacrifice. *Took the fire*—some burning charcoal in an iron grating carried by a chain. *And a knife*—Ah! was not that the heaviest of all to carry? V. 7. *Where is the lamb?* His father had said, "we go to worship," v. 5, so Isaac knew well that a victim was necessary. But how that question must have pierced Abraham's heart? V. 8. *God will provide a lamb*—some attach prophetic meaning to this, referring it to "The Lamb of God," John 1 : 29, but more likely it was said evasively to Isaac, as though he could not bear to tell him that he himself was to be the victim. V. 9. *Bound Isaac*—Isaac's faith is as conspicuous as his father's; had he resisted, the old man could not have bound him. *Took the knife to slay*—By this act the sacrifice was virtually offered. Exo. 35 : 5, 21, 22, 29. Vs. 12, 13. *Lay not thine hand*—Jehovah will not sanction the heathenish practice of human sacrifices. *A Ram*—Isaac is often viewed as a type of Christ, but it accords better with this scene to regard him as a type of sinful humanity, and the lamb as the type of Christ dying for sins not His own. This Abraham may have recognized, John 8 : 56. V. 14. *Jehovah-jirch*—the Lord will see, or provide, which from that day passed into a proverb. *It shall be seen*—It was seen in the sacrifice of Christ.

LEARN. The severest trials are often blessings